



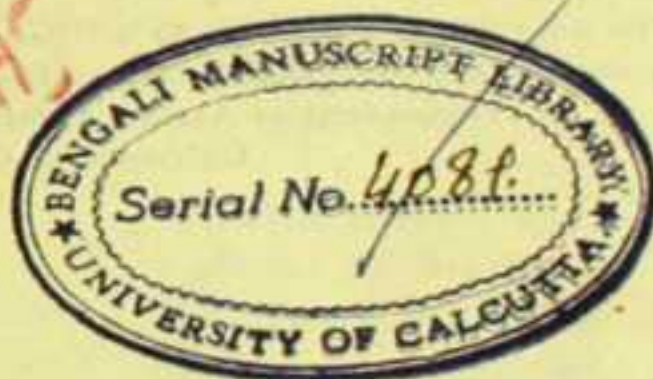
A STUDY OF THE MAHĀVASTU - AVADĀNA

by

RADHAGOVINDA BASAK, M.A. PH.D.
*Formerly Professor of Sanskrit, Presidency College,
Calcutta*

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PREFACE

Dr. Radhagovinda Basak's study of the *Mahāvastu-Avadāna* was originally contributed to the J. N. Banerjea Volume. The present monograph is a reprint *ad verbatim* of that article.

The book consists of substantial portions of a series of lectures delivered by Dr. Basak as the Adhar Chandra Mukherjee Lecturer in Arts at the University of Calcutta for the year 1958. This has been published with the very kind permission of the Registrar, University of Calcutta.

The Avadāna stories contain important data of India's past and their detailed study often helps to illuminate many facets of ancient Indian life and culture. Dr. Basak's study of the *Mahāvastu-Avadāna* is the fruit of years of diligent labour and his treatment of it has been erudite and exhaustive.

As printing had to be completed in a hurry there will remain errors of editing and printing for which I crave the indulgence of the readers. The Association thanks Sri Dipak Sen for preparing the index to this monograph and to Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay for matters of publication.

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PRATAPADITYA PAL
*Hony. Jt. Secretary
The Alumni Association
Department of Ancient
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WORK, THE *MAHĀVASTU-AVADĀNA*



INDIAN LIFE AS REVEALED IN THE BUDDHIST WORK, THE *MAHĀVASTU-AVADĀNA*¹

RADHAGOVINDA BASAK

I

Political Aspect

INDIA is now a sovereign and independent country and is free from the unholy influence of foreign rulers who, wittingly and unwittingly, helped in the past the act of withholding of disclosure of her past history and civilization. Time has now come for us to strive to unravel all important aspects of our cultural heritage which we can possibly cull and collect from all kind of sources, including the literary ones. The most ancient and authoritative literary works, Brāhmanic, Buddhistic, Jaina, etc., deserve careful and critical study. Books like Patañjali's *Mahābhāshya*, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* and the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Uvāsagadasāo* and others are veritable mines of information about our past history and culture. We shall try to understand the evolution of modern Indian national life and culture in the light of what we can gather from our study of these very old Indian treatises, which form almost a virgin field of researches, so that the missing link between the ancient and modern Indian cultural thoughts may be discovered gradually to some extent.

For the last few years I have been studying the Buddhist Sanskrit work, the *Mahāvastu-avadāna* (written neither in pure Sanskrit, nor pure Pali, nor pure Prakrit, but rather in a conglomeration of all the three languages, generally called by scholars as 'the Gāthā dialect', or 'mixed Sanskrit') and to-day in my first lecture and in the next two, I wish to present to you the results of my study of this work, under the three headings: (1) political, (2) social and economic and (3) religious aspects.

At the outset, I wish to give you very shortly an idea of the form and content of the *Mahāvastu-avadāna*. This work be-

¹ These three lectures were delivered by the author as Calcutta University Adhar Chandra Mukherjee Lecturer in Arts for the year 1958.



longs to the *Vinayapitaka* of the Buddhist canonical literature, prepared according to the text of the Lokottaravādins of the Mahāsāṅghikas of Madhyadeśa, who were the earliest schismatics of the Second Buddhist Council of the fourth century B.C. These Lokottaravādins, as you all know, were *believers in the doctrine of all the Buddhas being 'Lokottara' i.e. uncommon, extraordinary, and superhuman, who, according to them, adapted themselves to worldly life, only to external view.* The time of composition or compilation of this partly prose and partly versified treatise is according to late Mm. Dr. H. P. Sastri the third-second century B.C. But Winternitz was of opinion that the nucleus of the work probably originated as far back as the second century B.C., even though it was enlarged in the fourth century A.D., and later still. However, *the chief contents of the work relate to biography of Gautama Buddha, adorned profusely with stories and miracles accompanying his conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment, conversion of some great persons to his faith, and his demise. It also contains some old and new Jātaka stories (i.e. the stories of previous births of the Buddha). In the structure of this biography of the Buddha and his many-sided activities and the Jātaka stories, we can find out many an information regarding the ancient life and culture of the Indians. It is very curious that the Mahāvastu itself (III. 250) in some gāthās gives an eulogy of the work in these words'—*

“O revered sirs, the great *Mahāvastu* which is a repository of *dharma*, which is full of great knowledge, which can bring welfare to the great mass (of people), has been revealed by Sugata, the perfect Buddha, for the good of all living beings. Those who preach the *Saddharma* (the true *dharma*, i.e. Buddhism) and those who hear it preached, all attain the immovable or immortal *Nirvāṇa* (the blissful state).”

Some preliminary remarks on ancient Indian political constitution are necessary at the outset to enable us to com-

महान्तं धर्मसंभारं महाजनहितावहं ।

महावस्तुं महाज्ञानं भदन्तसुगतेन हि ।

सर्वसत्त्वानां हिताय संबुद्धेन प्रकाशितं ॥

ये च देशेन्ति सद्धर्मं शृणोन्ति ये च देशितं ।

सर्वे ते अधिगच्छन्ति निर्वाणपदमच्युतं ॥



prehend easily the contributions of the *Mahāvastu* in this regard. It is now an established fact of Indian history that in ancient time India saw several forms of constitutional governments, such as *monarchical*, *oligarchical*, *republican* and *tribal states* which existed contemporaneously or at different periods of her ancient history, in different parts of the country. But the most prevailing form of early Hindu state-constitution was monarchical. It was not, however, an absolute monarchy, as some scholars might think. It was rather a political system controlled by *sachivas* (*sachivāyatta-tantra* as called by the author of the *Mudrā-rākshasa* drama). These *sachivas* (both *dhi-sachivas* or *mati-sachivas*, i.e. counselors and policy-makers and the *Karma-sachivas* or high executive state officers) formed, as it were, a healthy check to the king's becoming despotic and they were to some extent the unelected representatives in the Council of Ministers and the Administration. You all know that the doctrine of the *Saptāṅga* state is the epitome of the theory of ancient Hindu political constitution as advocated by Kauṭilya in his *Arthasāstra* and in all treatises on *rājanīti*. The seven constituents of state are—(1) The *Svāmin* or *Rājā* (the sovereign), (2) *Amātya* (ministers, counsellors, and *Adhyakshas* or heads of the secretarial departments including all kinds of officers i.e. the whole bureaucracy), (3) *Janapada* or *Rāshṭra* (people of the country-side), (4) *Durga* (military forts and fortified cities, towns and townships), (5) *Kośa* (treasury or exchequer), (6) *Daṇḍa* or *Bala* (army with its different troops i.e. the *chaturāṅga* force) and (7) *Mitra* or *Suhṛit* (allies). Beginning from Kauṭilya we have a traditional list of the eighteen *tīrthas* or *mahāmātras* who are the highest ministerial functionaries in the body-politic (i.e. in the monarchies in India). During the time of the great Māurya emperors including Chandragupta, Bindusāra and Aśoka, this *mahāmātra* system of administration was in vogue, and we find from stray references in the *Mahāvastu* that the same system prevailed in its own time. I feel it necessary here to name these eighteen *mahāmātras* in this lecture. They are as follows:—(1) *Mantrin* (the Chief Counsellor or Premier or Chancellor), (2) *Purohita* (Royal Priest, the King's adviser on matters, spiritual and temporal), (3) *Senāpati*



(War Minister; according to others Commander-in-chief), (4) *Yuvarāja* (Crown-Prince or heir apparent), (5) *Dauvārika* (chief of the Palace Police), (6) *Antarvamsika* (Superintendent of the Queen's Department or the harem), (7) *Prasāstā* (Inspector-General of Prisons), (8) *Samāhartā* (Collector-General of Revenue), (9) *Sannidhātā* (Chancellor of the Exchequer), (10) *Pradeshṭā* (Chief Magisterial Officer), (11) *Nāgarika* (city-Mayor), (12) *Pauravyavahārika* (Head of the Dharmasthas or judges i.e. the Chief Justice of the city), (13) *Kārmāntika* (chief officer for Mining and Manufacturing Departments), (14) *Mantriparishadadhyaksha* (President of the Council of Ministers), (15) *Daṇḍapāla* (chief of the army staff, or the chief Punitive Officer according to others), (16) *Durgapāla* (officer-in-charge of forts and fortresses), (17) *Antapāla* (chief Frontier Officer, i.e. the Warden of the Marches), and (18) *Ājavika* (officer-in-charge of the Forest tracts). It is evident that these functionaries cover almost all possible departments of the administration.

ORIGIN OF KINGSHIP AS IN THE MAHĀVASTU

I have stated elsewhere that in analysing the theory of state, or, in other words, the philosophy of sovereignty, the ancient political thinkers and teachers *could not forget the idea of the sinful aspect of human nature*, which always tends to interfere with the rights and liberties of others over their own security and property, and to violate morals and manners. Hence it is that a governmental institution was a necessity for controlling or coercing human viciousness and wickedness and for keeping secure the life and property of the people, and also preserving their assigned social duties. And it is the proper administration of the power of punishment by a kingly person that can save the society from passing into the condition of *mātsya-nyāya*, as it is technically called in ancient Indian political philosophy, i.e., a state of lawlessness and anarchy in society in which the stronger people oppress the weaker, like the large fish devouring the smaller ones. So they felt that the fear of indignation and punishment by a kingly person ought to be the basis of the social order and of the welfare and security of the people.

The above political idea struck the mind of the ancient



Indian people too, and it is told in the *Mahāvastu* (Vol. I, pp. 358-59), when it related the history of the homes and origin of the *Sākyas* and *Koliyas*, that being oppressed by the three wrong and sinful acts, viz. of theft (अदिग्भदान), falsehood (मृतावाद) and violence (दण्डदान) of the anti-social elements in society on account of which there appeared in society wrong and injustice (अधर्म and असद्वर्त्म), people wandered hither and thither, met together, discussed and ultimately selected from amongst themselves the most trustworthy (*sarva-prāsādika*) and the most authoritative (*sarva-maheśākya*) person to be their king and addressed the chosen person thus:—"Your Majesty is quite fit to punish him among us who deserves punishment and reward or favour him who deserves honour. We all approve of your being placed at the head of all men, i.e., we elect you to sovereignty over us all. And we shall offer you one-sixth of *sāli*-paddy grown in *sāli*-fields of each of us." Then the *Mahāvastu* states vividly certain words regarding such an origin of kingship according to which the king should be styled as *mahāsammata*, *rājā*, *mūrdhābhishikta*, and *janapadas-thāma-vīrya-prāpta*. These are thus explained in that book:—"Thus originated the idea that *mahāsammata* means the person elected by the great mass of the people, that *rājan* means the person who merits or deserves to have the *sāli*-portion from the *sāli*-fields, that *mūrdhābhishikta* (*kshatriya*) means the annointed person who can perfectly guard and protect, and that *janapada-sthāma-vīrya-prāpta* means the person who has achieved the strength and power of the country's people, as he is as it were a father to the people of towns and provinces". This is how the king can declare—"I am king, an annointed noble (*kshatriya*) and one who has achieved the strength and power of the country-people." This description of the origin of kingship in the *Mahāvastu* reminds us of the statement of Kaṭilya (I. 13) on the selection of the king by the people, forming a political community and entering into a social contract or compact according to which the elected king agreed to rule righteously and protect the rights and properties of his subjects, who

भवानस्माकं सर्वं निग्रहारहं च निगृह्णातु, प्रग्रहारहं च प्रगृह्णातु, वयं ते सर्व-
सत्त्वानां अप्रताये समन्येम, स्वकस्वकेषु शालिक्षेपेषु दष्टं शालिभागं ददाम ।





again agreed to pay him *taxes in the shape of one-sixth of their field produce*. So it becomes clear that the king is paid to act as the servant of his people. The people of the *Mahāvastu* period held such a view on the relation between the king and his people.

Generally we learn from ancient books that the nobles or Kshatriyas were either made kings, or they succeeded to the hereditary throne. But we have in the *Mahāvastu* an instance of a Brāhmaṇa King of Mithilā ruling in Videha (III. 172). We also know that almost all ancient political philosophers were of opinion that the eldest son should succeed to the throne after his father's death (by the system of primogeniture). But the eldest brother could give up his right of succession to sovereignty to a younger brother asking the latter to take over the kingdom. A king could also establish a brother on the throne to deputize on his behalf during his absence from the capital (III. 15), but the counsellors were to be informed of this arrangement. King Brahmadatta of Kampilla, having no son of his, conceived an affection for Prince Punyavanta (III. 40) whom he gave his daughter to be married with and he established the son-in-law on the throne addressing the counsellors and the people of towns and countries thus—“He has become my son, so he will become the king, as I have grown old.” There are also many references in the *Mahāvastu* of marriage for political alliances of the parties concerned. Even a son born of a king's concubine (Jenta by name) could be made a king under special circumstances.

DUTIES OF A KING

All ancient Indian teachers of political science are of opinion that the *supreme duty* of a king is to contribute to the happiness (*sukha*) and welfare (*hita*) of his own people and to maintain, as the *daṇḍadhara* (wielder of the sceptre), law and order in his own kingdom, so that the life and property of his subjects may be well secured. *The king's other high duty* is to remain always vigilant over the doings of neighbouring and distant rulers of foreign states and to be ever ready for

‘एषो मे पुत्रो जातो ताव एषो भवे राजा, अहं बुद्धो ।’



direct hostility towards them by an act of war, if necessary, against their aggressions. The *Mahāvastu* contains many references to kingly duties (*rājadharmas*) and matters of administrative importance in various contexts. But it treats of the duties of a ruler in some greater detail in a Jātaka story named *Triṣakuniya-jātaka* (I. 271-282) wherein we read of three sagacious and intelligent birds, an owl, a *sārikā* (or mayanā-bird) and a parrot, adopted as his sons by King *Brahmadatta* of Kāśī, living at Banaras on the advice of a Himālayan ascetic, as the king had no (human) son of his own. These birds, having power to talk in human voice, imparted to their father, the king, some excellent lessons on *rājadharmas* in three very edifying lectures.

The first lecturer, the owl-bird, says in the beginning of its lecture that a king should not fall into the power of anger, for both the material and spiritual prosperity and wisdom of a king can only be attained, if he can restrain his anger.¹ Next the king is enjoined not to fall a victim to his own likes and dislikes and also to fear and infatuation. While administering justice² he is advised to hear the arguments of both parties in a dispute and decide the case righteously. The lecturing bird warns the king against constant engrossment in attractive worldly pleasures,³ lest his enemies should overcome him. The king should protect his own dominion consisting of both towns and country-side (*paura-jānapadam rāshtram*) and maintain them both and also his retinue by arranging for them easy availability of their essential requisites,⁴ so that his own people may not be alienated from him by his enemies. A policy of concession⁵ or favour to the poor and preservation of the rich in newly acquired territories should be adopted by him. He should admit large bodies of

¹ अशुद्धस्य हि राजस्य अर्थो धर्मो जनार्थिणः ।

प्रज्ञा कर्मति सर्वत्र तस्मा बोधं निवारयेत् ॥

² उभाभ्यां वचनं श्रुत्वा यथाधर्मं समाचरेत् ।

³ रंजनीयेषु कामेषु मातिबेलं प्रमोद्यति ।

प्रमत्तस्य हि कामेहि परशत्रु बलीयति ॥

⁴ भोगद्रव्यप्रदानेन अभेद्यपुरुषो भवे ।

⁵ अनुग्रहं च दीनानां आढयानां परिपालनम् ।



immigrants to his own kingdom as was done by previous rulers. He is exhorted to cultivate friendship (*mitra-bandha*) and not enmity (*vaira-bandha*) with rival kings (*pratirājas*), for all people worship the rulers who contract abiding friendship with other kings.¹ A king should *not indulge in incoherent talk*, but should resort to deliberation on politics based on proper reasons, and should *guard against divulgence² of state-secrets*, for, even great kings whose secret plans are revealed fall into great distress. Enemies of those rulers who can guard their secrets remain as slaves to him, out of fear of estrangement from their own friends caused by the secret policy of their rivals. The king should always provide for the protection and security of his law-abiding people,³ for the wheel of *dharma* (proper duties) can only move, if it can depend on the driving force of the king's military power. A king should be circumspect in all matters (*sarvārtheḥ samīkshākārī*) and awake in taking care of his treasury and granary. A king's realm becomes prosperous (*ṛiddha*), developed (*sphīta*) and populous (*janākula*) if he can rightly arrange for the protection of his people *through righteousness*. Thus can accrue welfare here and happiness hereafter.

The lecture of the second bird, Sārikā (mayanā-bird) refers to the dictum that every state stands steady on two bases⁴, namely the king's acquisition of previously unpossessed properties and conservation of new possessions. But he should make efforts for these two acts righteously, for the realm (*rāshṭra*) of a king ruling unrighteously becomes weaker and rent on all sides. A king should know whom to curb or coerce, whom to reward, whom to bring to his own side and whom to favour, otherwise he stands the chance of losing⁵ his material prosperity. A king should be vigilantly

¹ बहुमित्रां हि राजानो पुजेन्ति अपरा प्रजा ।

² भिन्नमन्त्रा हि राजेन्द्रा अनुभोति ध्यसनं बहुम् ।

³ धर्मास्थितेषु आरक्षां सदा कुर्यासि पाथिव ।

बलचक्रं हि निश्चाय धर्मचक्रं प्रवर्तते ।

⁴ द्विभिस्तु पादकंरतात अत्र लोकः प्रतिष्ठितः ।

अलब्धलाभो अर्थस्य लब्धस्य परिरक्षणं ॥

⁵ यो निग्रहं न जानाति प्रग्रहं वा जनाधिपः ।

संग्रहानुग्रहं चापि सो अर्था परिहायति ॥



alert in not appointing, to high posts of state in the frontiers, villages and the country-side, his own sons and brothers if they are found to be valiant, violent and vile in temperament. Claimants' to royal patrimony should not be humiliated, for, in that case they are liable to turn into dangerous enemies. A king should always weigh in his mind as to how to augment his own resources, curb his enemies and commiserate his own subjects in their distresses and difficulties. He should be careful about the movements near him of persons who may attempt to overhear his talking with his own men. He should always keep a watch on those who are brave, rich, prone to be won over by money, powerful in counselling and irksome. The king should select and appoint such men as ministers² who are politicians (*artha-chintaka*), learned, uncovetous, loyal and leaders of people. A learned minister by his wisdom conduces to the welfare and happiness of the state and its ruler, whereas a covetous and foolish one is of no good to both the king and his kingdom. This lecturer advises King Brahmadata to institute a strong espionage system, for, there is no efficient eye for a king like the spies and there is no policy like the spying system.³ Lastly the bird says that the king's *pratihāra* (i.e., the Chief of the Palace Police) should be wise and vigilant for ensuring the king's ease and comfort.

The third bird, the parrot, discussed on the five sources of the power which a king should desire to possess viz., (1) his brothers (*sahajaṁ balaṁ*), (2) his sons (*putra-balaṁ*), (3) his kinsmen and allies (*jñāti-mitra-balaṁ*), (4) his four-fold army (*chaturāṅga-balaṁ*), (5) his matchless wisdom (*prajñā-balaṁ*). A king endowed with this five-fold power can surely make his kingdom firm, prosperous, rich and populous. Of all these powers, intellect or wisdom (of himself and his counsellors) is of the highest value, for, by this the king shuns what should not be done and accomplishes what should be done. This is bound to bring blessings to himself, his friends and relatives

¹ विमानिता हि वायसा उद्भ्रान्ता भोन्ति शत्रवः ।

² अमात्यां देव कुर्यासि पण्डितमर्थचिन्तकं ।

अलुब्धमनुरवत्तं च राष्ट्रस्य परिणायकं ॥

³ नास्ति चारसमं चक्षुः नास्ति चारसमो नरो ।



and to the whole of his dominion. A man (i.e., a minister) who is deficient in wisdom, though he be of high birth, never becomes helpful to the king, nor dear to his people. The kingdom of such a king with weak intellect both in himself and his counsellors is destroyed by rival kings, and his subjects (*prakṛitis*) become alienated and seek another sovereign.¹ That chancellor of a king is highly honoured, who appoints to high offices of state persons brave, heroic and discerning.² The bird then refers to the most essential virtue of *adopting a righteous and moral course of conduct* and of shunning the unrighteous and immoral one, and thus doing he can expect to acquire glory³ in this world and heavenly bliss in the next. This is exactly the seemly conduct which king Aśoka stood for and the spirit of which breathed throughout all his moral edicts. Almost an *echo of the Aśokan sentiments of high morality* (even in politics) pervades this advice of the parrot-politician when he addresses the king of Kāśī to do the right by his parents (*Dharmam chara Mahārāja mātā-pitṛishu pārthiva*), his sons and wife (*putradāre*), his allies and ministers (*mitrāmātye*), the Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas (*Śramaṇe Brāhmaṇe*), his citizens and country-folk (*pure jānapade*) and also by this world and the next. Such a king according to the *Mahāvastu*, walking in righteousness, goes to heaven.

Any casual reader of Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra will be able to discern that the above political maxims and doctrines of the *Mahāvastu* are mere reflections of some of Kauṭilya's own political views. It may be assumed that the compiler or compilers of this Buddhist work possessed an excellent knowledge not only of the political philosophy of Kauṭilya, but also of the *dharma-rājya* principle of the Buddhist emperor Aśoka. To my mind these discourses on royal duties represent a versified version in Mixed Sanskrit or *gāthā* language of some of the important political principles of Kauṭilya. It

¹ विरक्ता प्रकृतयो च अन्यं मार्गन्ति स्वामिकम् ।

² अतीव सत्कृतो भवति पण्डितो अर्थचिन्तकः ।

वरान् यो च स्थापयति क्षूरां दीरां विचक्षणान् ॥

³ यशं च इहलोकस्मिं संपराये च स्वर्गति ।

अधर्मं परिवर्ज्य धर्ममाचरते सदा ॥



is difficult, however, to assert that this *Mahāvastu Jātaka* was pre-Kauṭilyan; it was rather a *post-Kauṭilyan treatise*.

CHAKRAVARTIN KING AND THE SIXTEEN MAHĀJANAPADAS

We know of no sovereign as the lord-paramount ruling over a very large North-Indian domain as *Chakravartin* king (universal king) before the establishment of the Maurya empire. Some of the Pali texts e.g., the *Anguttara-nikāya*, the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the *Chullaniddesa* have lists of the famous independent sixteen *Mahājanapadas* (big powerful states) into which Northern India was divided and which flourished just before the Buddha's time (c. 567-487 B.C.) and most probably during his life-time also. The *Mahāvastu* casually refers in many places to sixteen *Mahājanapadas* as existing in *Jambūdvīpa* (India, II. 2, III. 394). In connexion, however, with Buddha's converting some of the people of these states, the treatise gives us in Vol. I (p. 34) a list of their names as follows:—

(1) Aṅga, (2) Māgadha, (3) Vajji, (4) Malla, (5) Kāśī, (6) Kośala, (7) Cheti, (8) Vatsa, (9) Matsya, (10) Sūrasena, (11) Kuru, (12) Pañchāla, (13) Śibi, (14) Daśārṇa, (15) Aśvaka and (16) Avantī.

It may be noted that in this list the sixteen powers or nations have been shown almost in eight pairs, as in the Pali *Dīgha-nikāya*. Again in Vol. III. (p. 419) we have a second incomplete list of these states, (i.e., fourteen only) without mention of Śibi and Daśārṇa, but in one compound word in the following order, viz.—(1) Aṅga, (2) Magadha, (3) Vajji, (4) Malla, (5) Kāśī, (6) Kośala, (then) (7) Kuru, (8) Pañchāla, (and then), (9) Cheti, (10) Vatsa, (11) Matsya, (12) Sūrasena, (13) Aśvaka and (14) Avantī.

It may be noted that the two lists of the *Mahāvastu* omit the two states of *Gandhāra* and *Kamboja* which, occur in the Pali list, but it substitutes in their places Śibi and Daśārṇa.

Another point that should find mention in this connexion is that the *Dīgha-nikāya* has preserved another smaller list of some of these states with the names of their capital cities and this has been reproduced in a somewhat corrupt form in the *Mahāvastu* (in *Mahā-Govinda-sutra*, III, 208-209). In this

sūtra Mahā-Govinda, the Brāhmaṇa, said to King Renu of the story that this earth (meaning India) was a wide expanse of seven kingdoms which he mapped out thus:—The centre belonged to King Renu. Then are mentioned (1) the *Kaliṅgas* with Dantapura as their capital, (2) the *Āśmakas* with Potana, (3) the *Avantis* with Māhismatī, (4) the *Sauvīras* with Roruka, (5) the *Videhas* with Mithilā, (6) the *Aṅgas* with Champā and (7) the *Kāśīs* with Vārāṇasī (Banaras).

This provides evidence that some of the sixteen states were monarchical and some others republican.

Of the sixteen *mahājanapadas* (1) *Aṅga* comprised the modern districts of Bhāgalpur and Munghyr in Bihar. Its capital was the ancient city of Champā. It was once very flourishing and a centre of trade and commerce. The merchants from here went even to far-off Suvarṇabhūmi, south parts of Annam and Cochin China; even the Hindus colonized in those countries, and Indo-Chinese Champā was named after the name of Champā of Aṅga. (2) *Magadha* comprised the modern districts of Patna and Gayā in South Bihar. Its earlier capital was situated at Rājagṛīha (modern Rājgir). It was also called Girivraja, a great stronghold from where, much later, the head-quarters were removed to the newly-founded capital Pāṭaliputra during the Śiśunāga King Udayin's reign. (3) The *Vajjian* confederation (a republic) with which was often associated the most powerful clan of the Lichchavikas, had their central capital at Vaiśālī (modern Basārḥ in the Muzaffarpur district of North Bihar). The Vajji territory included eight confederate member-clans (*aṣṭakula*), the old Videhas, the Lichchhavis, the Jñātrikas and the Vrijis being the most important among them. Of them Videha clan had its capital at Mithilā. The Jñātrikas formed the clan to which belonged the great Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. They had one of their seats at Kuṇḍagrāma in the suburbs of Vaiśālī. The four remaining clans were the Ugras, Bhogas, Kauravas and Aikshvākas who resided in the suburbs. (4) The *Mallas* were divided mainly into two parts, those of *Kuśinārā* (identified with Kāśia some 35 miles to the east of Gorakhpur) and *Pāvā* (identified with the modern village named Padraona some 12 miles to the north-east of Kāśia. It is indeed a fact



that, as told in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the Mallas were sometimes called as Vasetṭhas (men of the Vaśishṭha *gotra*). The *Mahāvastu* in its story of Gautama's renunciation mentions that the Bodhisattva rode southward twelve *yojanas* from Kapilavastu to the territory (*Vishaya*) of the Mallas to an *adhishṭhāna* (site) named Anomiya, not very distant from the hermitage of the seer Vaśishṭha.¹ (Probably the locality of Vaśishṭha's hermitage influenced the Mallas to be called also Vāsetṭhas). (5) The province (Janapada) of *Kāśī* with its capital *Vārāṇasī* is mentioned many times in the *Mahāvastu* in different contexts. It was a monarchical state, highly prosperous and it was the ambition of its rulers to become the most prominent amongst all other kings and the lord of the whole of Jambūdvīpa (India). (6) The kingdom of *Kośala* was very famous during Buddha's life-time. Ancient *Kośala* may be taken as corresponding to modern *Oudh*. It was however, divided into two parts, north and south. *Śrāvastī* (modern *Sāhet-Māhet* near *Gonḍa* district of U.P.) was the capital of North *Kośala* and *Kuśāvati* that of South *Kośala*. Buddhist *Jātaka* stories describe on many occasions a great rivalry between the two courts of *Kāśī* and *Kośala*, the latter having become more powerful by the conquest and annexation of the former. *Kāśī-Kośala* became later on a great power. Historians know that *Kośala*'s rivalry with *Magadha* ended when that kingdom became absorbed into the *Magadha* empire, (probably under either the *Śiśunāgas* or the *Mauryas*). Some texts attribute the fault of this rivalry between the *Kāśīs* and *Kośalas* to the latter. But the *Mahāvastu* (in Vol. III, 349 ff) gives in the *Ājñāta-Kauṇḍinya Jātaka* that the king of *Kośala* was a virtuous and a mighty monarch, who was honoured for his generosity and liberality, intent on doing favour to others (*parānugraha-pravṛtta*) and having an eye to the next world (*paralokadarśin*) and he was regarded as *dhārmika*.

But the King of *Kāśī* who was not other-worldly (*aparalokadarśin*) intended to invade the kingdom of the *Kośalas*. He invaded the land of the *Kośalas*, (being fully equipped with the four arms, the elephant troops, the cavalry, the chariots

¹ बोधिसत्त्वो दक्षिणेन द्वादश योजनानि नीतो मल्लविषयं अनोमियं नाम अधिष्ठानं वशिष्ठस्य ऋषिस्य आश्रमपदस्य नातिदूरे । महावस्तु, II. 164.



and the infantry). But his invading forces were routed and broken up by those of the Kośalas. Again, Kāśī twice invaded the Kośala territory. In the conflicts many thousands of people, having exposed their bodies to the *swords, arrows, śakti weapons* and *axes*, fell into misfortune and calamities (तत्र बहूनि प्राणिसहस्राणि उभयतो अन्यनन्यस्य असिशरशक्ति-
तोमराणि काये उपनिपातेन्ता अनयव्यसनमासादयन्ति III. 350). A turn in the mental attitude of the just, kind and considerate king of the Kośalas came when he saw so much loss of men and resources, because of the *greed for a kingdom by the Kāśī King* who destroyed so many people and perpetrated so much of wrong (*adharmā*). Hence the Kośala King left his kingdom and went away to the Dakṣiṇāpatha (Deccan). While on journey thereto he met a sea-faring Kośalan merchant (*samudra-yātrika sārthavāha*) who was proceeding by land coming from the southern sea (*dakṣiṇāto samudrāto*) towards Kośala after a ship-wreck which caused the loss of all his cargo. He could not recognize the *Kośala King now in disguise*, but knowing of him as a compassionate and just ruler, always devoted to help others in poverty he thought that his own country's king would grant him some money which would enable him to ply his trade again and to recover from the ship-wreck disaster. Having told the disguised king of his loss of valuable wares at sea, the merchant expressed the hope that the king would give him material assistance. The king, on hearing this story, wept and shed tears. The king disclosed his identity to the ship-wrecked Kośalan merchant and said that his kingdom was invaded by the *Kāśī ruler who robbed all its properties*. Realizing the despair of the merchant the Kośala king devised a new way and asked him to tie his arms behind and take him to the king of Kāśī who would certainly be pleased to grant riches to the merchant because of his capture of the Kośala king. He was then taken to Kāśī and the king of that territory feeling amazed at the *idea of the self-sacrifice of the Kośalan King* declared—"It is not right for us to deprive such a righteous king of his kingdom." He then consecrated once more the King of Kośala to his own throne

न पुनस्तस्मात् एव धार्मिकस्य राज्ञो राज्यमपहर्तुमिति । पुनरपि कोशलराजानं स्वके राज्ये अभिविष्य काशिराज्यं गतः । (III. 353).



and left for his own kingdom and the Kośala King then bestowed on the merchant a large amount of riches.

This story serves as an evidence of the old struggle between the two kings of Kośala and Kāśī and it is stated in the Ājñāta-Kaṇḍinya Jātaka of the Mahāvastu. But in a later period Kośala was annexed by the Kāśī rulers to their kingdom. It may also be noted here that Kośala kingdom exercised political sway over the Śākyas of Kapilavastu in the Nepalese Terai and in the Majjhima-Nikāya Buddha is mentioned as a Kośalan person ("भगवान्पि कोसलको अर्हन्ति कोसलको").

(7) The *Cheti* or *Chedi* kingdom lay near the Yamunā river and between the Kurus and the Vatsas. Its capital is stated in Buddhist literature as *Sothivatīnagara* (probably equivalent to *Śuktimatī* of the Mahābhārata). In ancient period Chedi corresponded roughly to the eastern part of modern Bundelkhand and its hilly tracts.

(8) The mahājanapada of the *Vatsas* (or *Vamśas*) was situated south of the Ganges on its right bank near that of Chedi. Its famous capital was *Kauśāmbī*. King Udayana of this kingdom was very powerful and was Buddha's contemporary. His rivalry with the Avanti King Pradyota is a historical fact. Most literature states that at last Udayana fled with the king's daughter, *Vāsavadattā*.

(9) The mahājanapada *Matsya* may be regarded as corresponding to modern Jaipur in Rājasthāna. Its ancient capital was *Virāṭanagara* (modern Bairat). This country is associated in Buddhist literature with the *Śūrasenas*. According to our late friend Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhury it was probably, after loss of its independence as a monarchical constitution, annexed to the neighbouring kingdom of Chedi.

(10) The territory of the *Śūrasenas* had its capital at *Madhurā*, also called *Mathurā*. Buddhism grew here after its king, named Avantiputra, was converted to be a disciple of the Buddha. Kṛishṇa-worship was prevalent here at the time of Megasthenes when *Śūrasena* had already become an integral part of Magadha.

(11) The *Kuru* territory was a big one and it had its capital *Indapaṭṭa*, i.e., *Indraprastha* near modern Delhi. The town of *Hastināpura* is also mentioned to have been situated in this kingdom. In Buddha's time this country is known to have



been under a titular chieftain named Koraya. It later changed its monarchical constitution to a republican one, as is also referred to in the *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya, and the Kurus were known as *rāja-śabdopajīvinah* (using only the title of *rājās*).

(12) The old *Pañchāla* territory, comprising modern *Rohilkhand* and a part of the *Central Doab*, was divided into two parts, northern *Pañchāla* with *Ahichhatra* (modern *Rāmnagar* in the *Barcilli* district) as capital and southern *Pañchāla* with *Kampilā* (in the *Farakkabad* district) wherein once lived and ruled the famous legendary universal king, *Brahmadatta*, who is, however, described in the *Mahāvastu*, as the king of *Kāśi*. The famous city of *Kānyakubja* (*Kanauj*) was situated in *Pañchāla* territory. Later this monarchical constitution changed for a republic, as we also find in *Kauṭilya's Arthasāstra* (XI. 1) in which, like the Kurus, the *Pañchālas* established a *Śreṇī* or *Sangha* form of government in which the elders were *rāja-śabdopajīvinah*.

In the *Kuśa-jātaka* story as related in the *Mahāvastu* we observe that the Queen-mother *Alindā* asked her ministers and priests to send out *Brāhmaṇas* and messengers (*dūtas*) to the cities and provinces in all quarters to find a suitable bride for her son, *Kuśa*, son of King *Ikshvāku* of *Kāśi*. The *Brāhmaṇas* and messengers scoured the sixteen *janapadas* and came to the city of *Kānyakubja*¹ which is stated here as situated in the province of *Sūrasena* and there they found a King of *Madrakas*, named *Mahendraka*, reigning there and his daughter *Sudarśanā* the most beautiful maiden in whole *Jambudvīpa* was selected to be the bride of *Kuśa* to become his chief queen. So we find here *Kānyakubja* situated in the *janapada* of *Sūrasena* and not *Pañchālas*.

(13) The territory of the *Śibi* (old *Siboi*) people were most probably the inhabitants of the *Shorkot* region in the *Jhang District* of the *Punjab*, below the junction of the *Jhelum* and the *Chenab*. Their capital was at *Sibipura* (modern *Shorkot*). *Alexander* met the *Śibi* people in that region in the fourth century B.C. Probably the *Śibis* later migrated to *Rājasthana*

¹ ते यानि ब्राह्मणा च दूता च जनपदान्वमाना शूरसेनेषु जनपदेषु कन्नकुब्जं नाम नगरं तत्र अनुप्राप्ता । तत्र महेन्द्रको नाम मद्रकराजा राज्यं कारयति ।



and lived in Madhyamikā (modern Nāgarī near Chitor), an ancient city, known to Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. Coins of the Śibi-janapada were also found. It had a republican constitution. The Śibis are also found mentioned in some Pali Jātaka stories.

(14) The people of *Daśarṇa* are placed by late Dr. H. C. Ray Chaudhury as dwelling on the river Dasān (Dhasan) in Bundelkhand. But Kālidāsa places these people in the Vidiśā or Bhilsā region. It was, according to this view, a country forming the eastern part of Malwā with its capital at Vidiśā (modern Bhilsā) situated on the Vetravatī or Betwā of the *Meghadūta* (vv. 24-25) and Kālidāsa also makes Vidiśā a river which is probably the same as Beas, that joins the Betwā.

(15) The *Āśvaka* (Āśmaka, or Pali Assaka) country was on the banks of the Godāvarī with its capital at Potana-nagara. In some Buddhist texts it is associated with Avanti and it seems probable that its territory approached the southern part of Avanti. Some old scholars took the country as representing the Mahārāshṭra. In Buddha's time the ruler of Assaka was a king—Prince Sujāta being his son.

(16) In Buddha's time *Avanti* was a great kingdom under king Pradyota Mahāsena, father of Vāsavadattā, queen of Udayana—the other famous contemporary rival kingdoms then being those of *Magadha*, *Kośala* and *Vatsa*. This country roughly comprised the *Ujjayinī* region. This mahājanapada was divided into two parts—the northern one with *Ujjayinī* as capital and the southern with the capital at Māhismatī as stated in Buddhist literature. *Ujjayinī*, modern Malwā, Nimar and some adjoining parts of the Madhya Pradesh formed the ancient Avanti kingdom.

We have noted above that the *Mahāvastu* list of the sixteen mahājanapadas did not contain the names of Gandhāra and Kamboja, as in Pali lists; but it mentioned in their place the Śibi and Daśarṇa countries, although we have some reference to both these countries in some contexts of this treatise. We briefly state that:

(16a) *Gandhāra* represented the country formed by modern Peshawar, and Rawalpindi districts in the northwest (now in western Pakistan), with its capital at Takshasilā



(Taxila) which was in olden days a great centre of trade and learning.

It may be noticed that Gandhāra finds a mention in Pāṇini's grammar and it appears that it was situated (as pointed out in I.H.Q. recently by Prof. D. Kanjilal) to the south of the Kapiśā comprising the valley of the Kabul river. Some Buddhist stories take Kashmir as included within Gandhāra, which, with Takshaśilā, is also mentioned in Aśoka's Inscriptions.

(16b) The association of Gandhāra with the neighbouring country of *Kamboja* is well-known. This country (*Kamboja*) formed a hilly province round about ancient Rājapura (modern Rajaori) near Punch and included the *Hazara District* (now in western Pakistan) extending probably as far as Kafiristan. In the earlier period it had a monarchical constitution, but in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* we find the *Kambojas as having a Saṅgha type of republic, living on agriculture, cattle-breeding, trade and commerce and war-weapons (vārtā-śastropajīvinah)*. According to Professor D. Kanjilal "the territory watered by the head waters of the Oxus and comprising the Ghalches speaking areas of Pamir was known from the age of Pāṇini as *Kamboja*." This country is also mentioned in Aśokan Inscriptions. In some Buddhist works these people are said to have non-Aryan customs. The *Mahāvastu* (II. 145) refers to the well-trained good horses (*Kambojakā aśvavarā sudantā*) of this region.

Besides the above-mentioned countries (*janapadas*) and towns (*nagaras*) the *Mahāvastu* has mentioned in various contexts many other geographical sites, such as, the mountains Himavanta (the Himālayas), the Vindhya, the Kailāsa, the Gandhāmādana, the Jugandhara, the (fabulous) Meru, Sumeru; the rivers, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Śatadru, Nairāñjanā, Sarasvatī, Godāvarī, the Narmadā; the four continents (ruled by a universal king, a *chakravartin*) of *Jambudvīpa*, *Pūrvavideha*, *Aparagodānika* and *Uttarakuru*, China (Chin), and the *Dakṣiṇāpatha*, *Kaliṅga*, the towns *Siṃhapura*, *Hastināapura*, *Gayā*, *Champā* (III. 204), *Śrāvastī*, *Vaiśālī*, *Madraka* country, *Dīpavatī*, *Mathurā*, *Maru*, *Risipattana* (*Mṛiga-dāva*), *Kapilavastu*, *Nālandā*-village, *Lumbini*-village, *Uruvilvā*-village, *Gṛidhrakūṭa*, *Dantapura* (III. 204, 359, 362),



Girivraja (III. 93), Senāpatigrāma (III. 299, 416, 427), Sārathipura (III. 319), etc.

DESCRIPTION OF A PROSPEROUS KINGDOM

Whenever an opportunity presented itself the *Mahāvastu* described a prosperous kingdom of a good and righteous king, whether of Kāśi, Kośala, Vidha, Pañchāla or any other province, almost in similar terms. Firstly a universal king (*chāturanta*, *chakravartin*, *chāturdvīpa* or a *rājachakravartin*) is described as holding political sway over the four continents, *Jambūdvīpa*, *Pūrvavideha*, *Aparagodānika* and *Uttarakuru*. He is triumphant, just, a *dharmarāja* (righteous king), possessing the seven excellent treasures (*saptaratna-samanvāgata*) namely, (1) the wheel-treasure (*chakraratna*), (2) the elephant-treasure (*hasti-ratna*), (3) the horse-treasure (*aśvaratna*), (4) precious gem-treasure (*maṇiratna*), (5) the household-treasure (*grihapatiratna*), (6) the woman-treasure (*strī-ratna*), and (7) the leader treasure, i.e., the treasure of a large body of counsellors and administrators (*pariṇāyakaratna*). Such a universal king is said to possess a large number of brave, courageous and comely sons who are able to vanquish all foes. In this context we can cite the instance of a just (*dhārmika*) king of Kośala (III. 346-347) who is described as virtuous (*kṛitapunya*), majestic (*maheśakhya*), powerful (*mahābala*), wealthy with large treasures (*mahākośa*), and having great conveyances (*mahāvāhana*). His dominion is prosperous (*ṛiddha*), well-developed (*sphīta*), peaceful (*kshema*), well-supplied with food (*subhiksha*), having a thick population (*ākīrṇa-jana-manushya*) and subjects living very happily (*sukhita-manushya*). In the kingdom of a good king all violence, noisy affrays, riots or revolts are kept quelled (*praśānta-daṇḍa-dimba-damara*) and the robbers and thieves are held in check (*sugrihita-taskara*). The realm thrives in trade (*vyavahāra-sampanna*) and is governed with justice (*dharma-paripālya*). Such a king's renown spreads in all countries as being very liberal and generous in distributing charities (*dāna-samvibhāgaśīla*). His kingdom is free from providential calamities and disturbances (*nirupadrava* and *nirītika*) and is without the troubles caused by the unsocial elements in society (*akaṇṭaka*).



A KING BANISHED BY THE COUNSELLORS AND THE PEOPLE FOR OVER-CHARITABLENESS

The Buddha once praising of merits and virtues before the congregation (vide *Vijitāvin Jātaka*, III. 41 ff) told them of King Vijitāvi of Mithilā for his liberality and generosity. This king could not refuse to give anything to Śramaṇas, Brāhmaṇas, the poor and the beggars. Whoever wanted an elephant, a horse, chariot, a conveyance, a woman, male and female slaves, clothes, vessels, cows, gold, cash-money, etc. i.e., whoever wanted anything, the king used to fulfil his desire. He felt exultation¹ by liberality and charity and never regretted his gifts afterwards. Now on account of his excessive largesses, *there was depletion of the royal coffers.*² So the officers of the *gāṇanika* department (Accountants), the great state-functionaries, the hereditary counsellors, and the townsmen and country folk and the mass of people all met together and (after deliberation) banished the king to settle in a forest-grove in the Himālayas. So we find that a democratic force was prevalent even then for advising the ministers for banishing a king who caused a failure of treasuries by his gifts. Of course, the king was later restored to his own throne by those very persons who had driven him out, because they found their kingdom fallen in draught, and short of food, and oppressed by thieves, and enemies since his banishment.

¹ अथ हलु ददन्तो परित्यजन्तो आत्तमनो भवति न च दृष्ट्वा पश्चादनुत्पद्यते ।

² सो दानि अतिदानं ददाति कोशानि क्षीयन्तीति । गणकेहि च महामात्रेहि च कुमारामात्येहि च नैगमजानपदेहि च महाजनकायेन च संनिर्पातित्वानं ततो राज्यतो विप्रवासितो समानो अनुहिमवन्ते महावनपण्डे ।



II

Social and Economic Aspects

PART I

It is known quite well to you all that the materials for drawing out a picture of social life in ancient India are well provided by the *Gṛihya-sūtras*, the *Śrauta-sūtras*, the *Dharma-sūtras* and the *Smṛiti-samhitās* and that scholars have dealt with them in their various contributions. We are here concerned only with some supplementary matters on certain topics of social life as we could collect from our study of the *Mahāvastu*.

There are numerous references in this treatise of the different members of the society of the times, e.g., the Brāhmaṇas, the Śramaṇas, the Kshatriyas and also of the merchants (*śreṣṭhins*), the craftsmen, the artisans, and many other sorts including the Chaṇḍālas and Pukkaśas. This book does not, however, clearly state anything about the *chaturvarṇas* and *chaturāśramas* in so many words. There are only a few references to these two systems with regard to description of non-Buddhist members of the society, specially of those who embraced the Brāhmaṇic faith. Generally we do not find much about the rules of castes and orders in this book. That the highest status of social life was assigned to the Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas is evident in it, and next comes the status of the ruling class, the Kshatriyas. In the second (i.e., the economic) section of this lecture we shall deal with a very large number of guilds of traders, craftsmen and artisans, who must have belonged to other classes of society-men (mostly the Vaiśyas and Śūdras). Not much stress is given in this book on the *jāti* or birth or family in which people were born. But merits of individual persons and virtuous life alone did count with the people of the *Mahāvastu*-period. Disabilities of the earlier period of Brāhmaṇic influence on the Śūdras are not much in evidence here and they only reappeared in society, as you know, in still later periods of Indian history.

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SLAVES AND SLAVERY

The system of slavery was prevalent in ancient India from very early times. The Smṛiti books give descriptions of various kinds of slaves, acquired by birth, purchase, gift, capture and other methods—and their social disabilities are also mentioned therein. Slaves, both male and female, lived in householders' families. Those books also provide legal ways for the release of people from slavery and servitude. Generally speaking, they worked as household servants. Kings and rich men of the Indian society possessed slaves in large numbers to work as such. They were often treated in an inhuman way.

The *Mahāvastu* enjoins in one passage (I. 18) that those people in the world who cause slaves to be shackled with fetters and chains and get them work forcibly, are liable to be reborn in a hell on account of maturing of their cruel and sinful deeds. The book also says that enslaving of beings who are without protection or refuge is a sinful action and those who do so, go to hell. Rich merchants used to possess large numbers of bondsmen (*dāsas*) and bondswomen (*dāsīs*) in their house. Reference to slaves' reciting wise-sayings even to kings is found in this treatise (I. 95). Often kings are seen to make gifts of slaves, male and female, to those who needed them in times of distress. Śuddhodana's palace was crowded with slave-women (*cheṭīs*) and courtesans (*velāsikās*) and also fair-looking women standing still or moving about, and even holding scimitars in their hands (*pragrihīta-khaḍga-hastā*). Reference is obtained to a possible faithlessness of a man to his wife of high degree, chaste and devoted, and to his new faith in a slave-girl (II. 57). *Cheṭīs* (slave-girls) often served in the house of rich courtesans also (cf. *Śyāmā-Jātaka*, II. 166 ff). The venerable Māhākāśyapa once reported to Ānanda that he left his comfortable home wherein there were five hundred bondsmen (*dāsas*) and so many bondswomen (*dāsīs*). In the house of Śārīputra's father at Nālandāgrāma there lived a large number of female and male slaves. Even in rich priestly Brāhmaṇa families, along with abundant resources, a large number of both male and female slaves worked. This was in Avantī. Again at Māthurā and Banaras



in the house of guild-presidents (*śreṣṭhins*) many male and female slaves found occupation. King Bimbisāra granted amongst other gifts a hundred female slaves to his Brāhmaṇa priest and tutor for the latter's celebrating the glory of the Buddha who came to his kingdom. Thus we see that slavery as a system prevailed in India at the time of the *Mahāvastu* period also.

HARLOTRY OR THE PROFESSION OF COURTESANS

Ancient Indian society acknowledged the profession of *gaṇikās* or courtesans as an institution. Kings kept courtesans in royal courts. These courtesans enjoyed a social status on account of their high accomplishments. They were proficient in the arts of singing, acting and playing on musical instruments and expert in attracting the mind of rich people. They were fully possessed of the art of wiles for infatuating their lovers. You know that there is a chapter in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* named *Gaṇikādhyakṣa* (II. 27) from which we can get an idea of the profession of these harlots who enjoyed a status recognized even by the Administration which, through the *adhyakṣas* or superintendents, could determine the earnings, inheritance, income, expenditure and future prospects in their profession and realize some particular taxes from them. In this connection we may remind ourselves that one of the most beautiful and earliest Sanskrit dramas, the *Mṛichchhakaṭika*, contains the thrilling record of how a very rich and highly accomplished and noble-minded courtesan, named Vasantasenā, felt happy and fortunate in contracting genuine love for a very respectful and accomplished person, Charudatta—a Brāhmaṇa of a lofty social order, and how at last by the king's decree they were both united in marriage and the bride, Vasantasenā, once a harlot, obtained the state permission to assume the highly covetable social status of a householder's family, viz., a *vadhū* (house-wife).

It may now interest you to know further that we find in the *Mahāvastu*, as in the Pali literature, that the famous courtesan of Vaiśālī, Āmrapālīkā by name, accompanied the Lichchhavis to give a grand reception to Lord Buddha during his visit to Vaiśālī. Courtesan Āmrapālī even entertained Lord Buddha by an invitation to her house for a meal to be



taken along with his disciples, and after the hospitality she made over her Mango-grove to them. It may sound strange that we read in the *Mahāvastu* of an ancient king of Sāketa named Sujāta who had five royal princes through a duly married Kshatriya wife. But the king had a concubine named Jentī whose son was named Jenta. Jentī pleased the king by her womanly qualities and the king, being gracious to her, offered her the choice of a boon (I. 348). She asked her parents about the king's wish and they advised her to ask for the boon of a good village ("ग्रामवरं याचाहि त्ति") for them. There was there a certain female devotee (*parivrājikā*), learned, crafty and intelligent, who remarked to Jentī saying thus:—"You are yourself the daughter of a concubine, your son has no right to any of his father's properties, not to speak of his kingdom ("जेन्ति त्वं वेलासिकाये धीता, तव पुत्रो न किञ्चित् पैतृकस्य द्रव्यस्य प्रभवति, किं पुनः राज्यस्य" I. 349). But those five princes, sons of a Kshatriya noble woman, have full right to their father's kingdom and estate" ("एते पंच कुमाराः क्षत्रिय-कन्यापुत्राः ते पैतृकस्य राज्यस्य च द्रव्यस्य च प्रभवन्ति" I. 349). This *parivrājikā*, moreover, pointed out to Jentī that King Sujāta was a man not to go back on his word, and being truthful was sure to keep his promise. So she advised Jentī to request the king thus—"Banish, O King, those five sons of yours from the kingdom and anoint my young son (Jenta) as heir to the throne" ("महाराज, एतां पंच कुमारां राज्यातो विप्रवासेत्या जेन्तं कुमारं युवराज्ये अभिविचाहि" I. 349). Jentī did request the king as directed, and the king granted her the boon asked for, although he was sorely troubled on account of his love for the five princes, but having offered a boon to his concubine, he could not do otherwise. Almost the whole body of people of the cities and provinces accompanied the five banished princes to the Himālayan region. We find here in the story that generally a concubine's son by a king had no right to paternal property, but the king could create such right by appointing his courtesan's son to succeed even to the throne.

It may, again, interest you to know that in the *Mahāvastu* (II. 166-177) there is a Jātaka story called the *Śyāmā-Jātaka* in which we have a graphic picture of the life and conduct of



a very rich courtesan of Banaras, named Śyāmā, who lived in the courtesans' quarter or street of the city and who was described as extremely rich in gold and silver furnitures and jewellery, also as having a suite of many servants, slaves, labourers and maids. Her love for a merchant, named Vajrasena, a horse-dealer (सायंबाह अश्ववाणिजक) hailing from Takshaśilā, who came down from that far off north-western region to Banaras with a caravan of horses, and his wrong conviction by the royal court of Banaras for alleged theft in the royal palace and the king's order for his execution and his subsequent escape through bribery arranged by Śyāmā and his ultimate unfortunate attempt to drown to death his mistress, Śyāmā, in her residential lake, when she was made dead-drunk, may provide us with materials for tracing the throttling of Vasantasenā by Śakāra in the *Mṛichchhakaṭika* drama. There is another agreement between the two stories. Śyāmā also, like Vasantasenā, was, with the king's permission, allowed to live as a member of the household of the father of a former lover of hers. It seems that such raising of courtesans to a high social status was indeed a kind of legalization of an illegitimate social act of the age. By the way, we have a reference in this Jātaka-story to actors of Taxila coming down to Banaras for performance of their dramatic art and Śyāmā could understand the conversation of the actors in a Northern dialect or speech which could be well understood by her, although she was an inhabitant of Banaras, because of her previous company with the horse-dealer of Taxila, Vajrasena, her former paramour, from whom she must have picked up that dialect ("ताये दानि श्यामाये तेषां नटदारकानामुत्तरापथकं भाष्यं प्रगृहीतं" II. 175). Rūpavanta, the son of a counsellor of a king named Añjanaka of Banaras, always spoke in praise of beauty, thinking that it (beauty) was the supreme thing in the world and to show his comrades the fruit of his beauty he went down to a stall in the market of the city of Kampilla where he caught the eye of a leading courtesan (*agra-gaṇikā*), who fell in love with Rūpavanta, because he was so charming, comely and stately with perfect beauty of complexion. The courtesan invited him to her fine dwelling-house through a maid as messenger. The



beautiful man was bathed with perfumed oil, bathing powders and exquisite ointments and was arrayed in garments of Kāśi-silk, and was given costly food to eat. At Rūpavanta's instance the courtesan gave a hundred thousand pieces of gold (coins) to the four companions of his. When the companions came there, they saw Rūpavanta sitting in the arms of the lady. Rūpavanta told his friends that by beauty only he had won a store of wealth in a courtesan's house. So we see that leading courtesans possessed much wealth. The names of two other courtesans of Banaras, named Kāśikā and Upārdha-kāśikā of lovely body which they got as a maturing of their good Karma in their former lives are found mentioned in the *Mahāvastu*, their fee being very high.

It is not strange that the high-class courtesans (*gaṇikās*) were addressed by people with the title *āryadhītās* (daughters of Āryas). Dispute often arose regarding their fees (*bhāṭakās*) which were generally charged high from merchant's sons (*Śreṣṭhi-putras*).

SOME MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

Marriage in Indian life has always been held as a religious sacrament and it is never, even now, taken as a contract of a secular nature. There have always been some prohibitions of marriage-relation between cognates and agnates, although there are also some exceptions, e.g., the custom of marrying the maternal uncle's daughter among the southerners. In the history of the homes and origin of the Śākyas and Koliyas (in Vol. I of the *Mahāvastu*, pp. 338-359) we have a clear reference to the political fact that the town of Sāketa was the capital of the joint state of Kāśī and Kośala and that the Śākyas of Kapilavastu had a sort of political subordination to the Kośala rulers. In this story of the *Mahāvastu* we also read of the banishment of the Śākya princes (the sons of King Sujāta) from Kāśī-Kośala and of their travel towards the Himālayan region where was situated the hermitage of Rishi Kapila (probably the founder of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy) from whose name, it is stated there, the Śākya capital was so called (Kapilavastu) ("ऋषिस्य नामेन कपिलवस्तु" I. 351; "कपिलेन ऋषिना वस्तुं दिशंति कपिलवस्तुसमाख्या उदपासि")



I. 352). These princes lived for some time in the Śākoṭa-grove of that region whereto used to go merchants from Kāśī-Kośala and wherefrom merchants came out to the latter place for trading purposes. It is described that these princes, out of fear of defilement of their special race, arranged mutual marital connection of their own female relatives and sisters among themselves, that is to say that they did not seek their marriage relationship with other racial families, lest their blood should be polluted. This historical information reminds us of the prevalence of a similar practice (described also in some Pali Jātakas) in the early *setṭhi* families, of marrying within their *jāti* and such marriages amongst themselves were regarded as desirable and underogatory. This may be treated as due to a deep concern of these rich racial groups of commercial community for equal marriage and purity of blood. In the *Mahāvastu* story referred to above, we find King Sujāta asking his ministers as to whence those princes had arranged to get their wives and they answered referring to the prevailing custom as stated above ("राजा अमात्यानां पृच्छति। कुतो कुमारेहि दाराणि आनीतानि। अमात्या आहन्सुः—श्रुतं भो महाराज कुमारेहि जातिसंदोषभयन स्वकस्वका येव मातृयो भगिनोयो परस्परस्य विवाहितायो, मा मो जातिसंदोषं भविष्यतीति।" I. 351). It should not sound strange that on the king's reference to the royal chaplain (*purohita*) and the learned Brāhmaṇas (*Brāhmaṇa-paṇḍitas*) as to the propriety of such marriage relation, the latter gave their approval to it, saying that such actions as taken by the princes could be permitted ("शक्या एतमेव कर्तुं यथा तेहि कुमारेहि कृतं।" I. 351) and there would accrue to them no sin for taking such a step ("शक्यं महाराज कुमारा ततो निदानं दोषेण न लिप्यन्ति" I. 351). King Sujāta became highly pleased on hearing of this verdict from the Brāhmaṇa-Paṇḍitas and made a solemn utterance (*udāna*) to the effect that the princes would henceforward be called Śākyaas (i.e., fit to be permitted for taking such wives) and that their name or title would be Śākiyas or the Śākyaas. ("शक्या पुनर्भवन्तो कुमारा। तेषां दानि कुमाराणां शक्यं शकिया लि समाख्या समाज्ञाप्रज्ञप्ति उदपासि" I. 351).

As regards the various marriage rites we find from the *Nalini-Jātaka* as told in the *Mahāvastu* (III. 150-151) that



the royal priest of the king of Banaras gave the royal maid, Nalinī in marriage to the seer, Ekaśringa, joining their hands. The seer's father Kāśyapa told his son that during his marriage he had to call the *deva* of the fire to witness, and to perform the water-ritual, and to join his hands with those of Nalinī, and that they could not forsake each other through all their lives. ("सो दानितं पुत्रं एकशृंगं ऋषिकुमारं आह—पुत्र एवा तव नलिनो राजकुमारी अग्निदेवं साक्षीकृत्वा उदकेन पाणिगृहीता दिव्या । एवा ते भार्या त्वं च एतस्या पतिः । न लब्ध्वा युष्माभिः परस्परस्य त्यजितुं" III. 151). Very likely the allusion of giving a girl to wife by the water-ritual is to the vessel of water which is carried by one who follows the pair of bride and groom when they go round the fire and sprinkles them with water at various points of the circumambulation ("एतेन तु एवा भार्या अग्निं प्रक्षिणीकृत्वा उदकेन पाणिगृहीता भार्या लब्धा ति" III. 151).

In this connection I shall refer my readers to a peculiar marriage as described in the famous story of the *Kuśa-Jātaka* (Vol. II and III), as delineated in the *Mahāvastu*. Briefly it may be stated that Kuśa's father, King Ikshvāku of Banaras had Alindā, his duly wedded chief queen, and a harem of four hundred and ninety-nine mistresses all of whom were barren. The king was pining for a male offspring and reflected that although he had an extensive realm and such a large harem, yet he had no son and he feared that he would remain childless until he died and his country would fall a prey to his enemies. The king consulted his household priest and the latter counselled to the king a most unjust, unseemly and improper course, advising him to let out his entire harem, keeping only Alindā, the chief queen in the palace, three times a week to take pleasure with whatever man they liked in order that King Ikshvāku might have descendants. Śakra, the Trāyastriṃśa deva, disguised as a decrepit, aged, senile Brāhmaṇa appeared before the king's court in Banaras and chose queen Alindā for himself. The King asked the old man to choose another woman, but the Brāhmaṇa told the king not to go back on his word and break his promise first giving him the choice of any woman of his harem. The King permitted the queen to go with the old Brāhmaṇa, who at



the close of the night stood before Alindā in his own form (of Śakra) and offered her the choice of a boon and the queen chose the boon of a son. Indra granted her prayer and gave her a medicinal pill advising her to stir it in water and swallow it and surely she would get a son who would be like a lion, strong and able to crush his enemy. He also said—“There will be no one in the whole world equal to him in powers. But that son will be ill-favoured of complexion and form, because the queen did not provide him with the joy of rapture as promised by the King”. The King in anger did not give the Queen to swallow the pill, but he ground it on a stone, stirred it in water and gave it to his four hundred and ninety-nine young queens to drink on a blade of kuśa grass. But Alindā, the chief Queen, was not given to drink of the pill, lest she should beget an ill-favoured son. All queens conceived and in time gave birth to beautiful and handsome sons. A son was born to Alindā also, but that son was ugly, repulsive, thick-lipped, thick-headed, thick-footed, pot-bellied and black in appearance like ink, because she also tasted a drop of water on the mill-stone with the tip of her tongue by means of a blade of kuśa grass. The King, however, refused to see such a son of queen Alindā and he wanted him not to become king after his death. After, however, the death of his father, it was Kuśa who with his great intelligence and reflective power successfully understood the message of his father, kept with the ministers, and the latter, in consultation with the other princes, the priests, the Brāhmaṇa royal tutors, the army officers and all the people of the towns and countries, made Kuśa the King. After having ruled his kingdom for some time, Kuśa once appealed to his mother, queen Alindā, to bring him a handsome wife who was to be his chief queen. His mother told him that no one would give her handsome and lovely daughter in marriage with him because he himself was ill-favoured in beauty. So Alindā said to him that wives and husband's live together happily when they are equal in beauty, for then they are not jealous of each other and that a beautiful wife reproaches an ill-favoured husband, and a handsome husband an ill-favoured wife. Hence she wanted to seek for a wife who would be suitable for her ugly son, Kuśa. But the latter pressed for



marrying a beautiful wife even from a distant land at the price of gold.

Brāhmaṇas and messengers were sent out by ministers and royal priests to find out a maiden who would be suitable for King Kuśa and they in going round all provinces came to the city of Kāṇyakubja in the province of Śūrasena where a king of the Madrakas, named Mahendraka, was reigning and there the Brāhmaṇas and messengers saw the most lovely and beautiful daughter of the king, named Sudarśanā going out of the city to the park and they thought that she would be a suitable chief queen for King Kuśa. They then interviewed King Mahendraka and opened before him their proposal of marriage between King Kuśa and Sudarśanā. Mahendraka agreed to the proposal. The spokesman of the delegation of messengers then bought some sweetmeats and distributed them among themselves as a mark of celebration of the betrothal. The best maiden in the whole of Jambudvīpa, they reported to the ministers and priests, had been chosen by them for King Kuśa's marriage. The queen mother Alindā approved the proposal and the news was communicated to King Kuśa who then, with a glad heart, asked the ministers, councillors, Brāhmaṇas, priests and royal tutors to make arrangement for fetching Sudarśanā from Kāṇyakubja for him and they being equipped with an army of four divisions set out with great splendour and magnificence and on reaching that city they told Mahendraka to fulfil his promise by giving his daughter, the proposed bride, for their King Kuśa. Then Mahendraka performed the rite of giving the bride for becoming the wife of Kuśa to the accompaniment of shouts of people and the beating of drums, kettle-drums, tabours and the blowing of trumpets, and the members of the deputation sent from Banaras performed the rite of taking the bride and they departed home. There is no mention, however, in the Jātaka story about any further solemnizing of the marriage when the bride arrived at Banaras. Even before the arrival of the bride, a king's daughter, the queen mother Alindā thought of the means by which Sudarśanā should not know what her groom, King Kuśa, was like in complexion and form. She devised a way deciding to provide a dark inner chamber, plastered inside and outside, but draped



with festoons of fine cloth, made fragrant with incense and strewn with garlands of flowers, wherein her son, Kuśa could divert, enjoy and amuse himself with his wife—but both not seeing each other with their eyes. Sudarśanā could not understand the reason why the bed-chamber was made dark and no lamps were lit in it. She felt sad for not knowing what her husband, King Kuśa, was like in complexion and form, nor did, according to her view, Kuśa know what Queen Sudarśanā was like in complexion and form. She privately asked her husband for the reason, but Kuśa replied saying that he himself did not know of this, but his mother must know this and he advised her to ask the queen mother. Sudarśanā enquired of her mother-in-law about this matter saying that she failed to understand why in such a rich royal family such an arrangement was made of a bed-chamber where no lamps were lit day and night and they both (husband and wife) lived together in darkness without seeing each other with their eyes. The Queen Mother replied saying—“Sudarśanā, you both, husband and wife, are sublimely beautiful. I have seen none others like you. The object is that you should not see each other's beauty and become distraught in mind. But I have also made a covenant with the gods that you should see each other only after a long time, twelve years, after you, my daughter-in-law, have a son or daughter. This is our family custom” (“अपि तु एवं च मे देवानामुपयाचितं चिरकालं अस्माभिः यदा मे वधुकाये सुदर्शनाये पुत्रो वा धीता वा भवेया ततो द्वादशमे वर्षे परस्परं पश्यिष्यथ । एषोऽमाकं कुलधर्मः” III. 445). For my present purpose I need not pursue the story which ended happily by Śakra favouring King Kuśa with the grant of a single rope of pearls with the *jyotirisa* gem which when fastened on the King's head removed his bodily deformity and made him look very beautiful in complexion and fair, and which kept hidden in his dress makes him recover his original ugly form. In Indian society there was a strong belief in the influence of *maṇi* (gem), *mantra* (incantation) and *oshadhi* (medicinal herb), even in so early days.

We can also guess of political alliances between kings through marriage relationship. Kings are often found advised to dower daughters with thousand pieces of gold and get royal sons-in-law (*jāmātrīs*) for achieving political strength.



FOOD AND DRINK OF PEOPLE; THEIR DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

There is a clear reference in a passage (III. 14) that the country-people in northern India generally fed themselves in barley-meal in powder form and were always clothed in blankets. Their food was coarse and their work was also so ("शक्नुमन्ना जनपदा नित्यं कम्बलप्रावृता । लुहभुक्ता लुहकर्मा" III. 14). Rice, wheat and many other cereals are mentioned. When poor boys go out to fetch wood they used to carry for their food knapsacks containing junket condiments, rice-gruel, solid food, meat dishes, sesamum. Confection, curds, curry, fish, fruits, ghee, ginger, honey, mead-drink, meat, mustard, fragrant rice, roots, sweet-meats, toddy drinks and spirits were taken by men of society according to their ranks and habit. In rich people's houses, men were served with food that was seasoned with flavours and condiments and there was plentiful meat, the flesh of boars, fish, buffaloes, young goats and sheep, cocks and peacocks, pheasants, quails, *lāvaka*s (a kind of lobster? or quail), francolin partridges and cranes. "बराहमत्स्या महिषा अजंडकशावक-कुक्कुट-मयूरा । तित्तिरवत-कलावक कपिजल सारस पि प्रभूता ॥" (III. 82).

Kāśi silk was mostly used by rich people, men and women. Gold and silver ornaments were much in use. Gems and jewelleries decorated the persons of royal families and rich men of society.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF HIGH-PLACED PRINCES

In order to be distinguished in life, princes and ministers' sons were given proper education and training from early ages. We learn from the *Mahāvastu* that when princes reached years of discretion at the age of seven or eight they were taught reading, writing, calculation (संख्या), numeration (गणना), craft of sign-manuals (मुद्रा), mnemonics (धारणीय), riding on elephants and horses and chariots, the use of bow and the bamboo, running, racing, swimming, archery, fighting, combat, cutting, stabbing and striking, and leading an army in battle and training in kingcraft. Under royal tutors the princes and ministers' sons were given training in Vedic lore and other branches of learning.



It is a most curious claim of the Buddhists that the important arts and sciences were revealed for the benefit and welfare of the world by the Bodhisattvas (i.e., the potential Buddhas, high personages blessed with good qualities of head and heart). It is stated in the *Mahāvastu* (I. 134-135) that all charms (मन्त्र) and medicines (अगद) were discovered by them; all remedies (भैषज्य) were prescribed by them; all sciences on the ascertainment of truth (तत्त्वनिश्चययुक्तानि शास्त्राणि) were developed by them; all methods of mathematical calculation (संख्यागणनं) and all forms of writing (मुद्रास्थानानि) were invented by them; all kinds of scripts (such as, Brāhmī, Puskarasārī, the Kharoshthī; the Yāvanī or the Ionian or the Greek, Pushpalipi, the Dardara, the Chinese, the Hūṇa, the Vaṅga, the Tramida or Dravidian etc.) were introduced by them; and even all fields of gold, silver, tin, copper, lead, precious substances and gems were revealed by them.

BOTANICAL KNOWLEDGE

Trees

The Buddha, being asked by the monks as to how the Lord succeeded in leading away Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana along with 500 monks from the pitiless heretical ways of the Parivrājaka (Wanderer's) sects and saved them from the rounds of birth, death and old age, related the Jātaka story of the Five Hundred merchants (III. 67 ff) in which, it is described that as the king of horses, named Keśin, he went from the land of Uttarakuru to the terrible sea-girt island of the Sirens (*rākshasī-dvīpa*) where they fell into their hands after a ship-wreck caused by a monster fish and saved by him and led across the great ocean and set down in Jambudvīpa. In that Jātaka we observe the ship-wrecked merchants approaching the grove of the Sirens and here we find a most important enumeration of various kinds of trees, flowers, plants and creepers growing in the grove. And it gives us an idea of the good knowledge possessed by our ancient people about botany. The trees mentioned are:—

- (1) Aśoka, (2) Atimukta, (3) Champaka, (4) Priyaṅgu,
- (5) Śāla, (6) Tilaka, (7) Vakula, (8) Kula(ra)vaka, (9)
- (bushes of) Punnāga (red amaranth) and (10) Tālisa.

There were also (11) (flowering) Karīra, (a kind of thorny



plant fed upon by camels), (12) Kulattha, (13) Karamarda, (14) Jivaka-latā, (15) Navamālikā (a variety of jasmine), (16) Pāṭaloka (trumpet-flower), (17) Kareṇu, (18) Kāvāra, (19) Varshaka or Vārshika varieties (agallochum), (20) Kārī, (21) Mallikā, (22) Kuvyaka, (23) Madagandhika, (24) Sāra (Sāla), (25) Tāra (Tāla, palmyra trees), (26) Āmra, (27) Karṇikāra, and (28) Vakula. There were also (29) Nāga-vṛiksha, (30) Bhavya, (31) Pālevata, (32) Pippala (the holy fig-tree), (33) Kapittha (wood-apple tree), (34) Āmrātaka, (35) Saptaparna, (36) Mucilinda, (37) Sahakāra, (38) Vilvāra (Bel), (39) Nārikera (coco-nut), (40) Mocā (plantain tree?), (41) Panasa (bread-fruit) (42) Kharjūra (date-tree), (43) Jambīra (the lime), (44) Mātuluṅga (citron), (45) Akshoḍa (walnut), (46) Tamāla, (47) Kimśuka, (48) Mṛidvika (vine) and (49) Dālima (pomegranate). It goes without saying that some of these varieties of trees and plants cannot be identified now.

PART II

To speak of the economic conditions is to speak on the *vidyā* called *vārtā*, which is defined by Kauṭilya as the science of agriculture (*kṛishi*), rearing of live-stock especially cows, oxen, horses etc. (*pāśupālya*), and trade and commerce (*vaṇijyā*). First of all, we cannot forget that the *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya has fully discussed some of the following economic topics, viz., (1) laying out new villages and townships in the country-side, (2) settlement of untilled and uninhabitable land, (3) planning of fortified towns and forts, (4) storing of treasures by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (*sannidhātā*), (5) collection of revenue by the Collector-General (*samāhartā*), (6) examination of jewellery and other valuables for entry into the royal coffers under the store-keeper (*kośadhyaksha*), (7) establishment of factories for mining operations under the superintendent of mines (*ākarādhyaksha*), (8) the duties and functions of the Chief Superintendent of Gold (*suvarṇādhyaksha*), (9) commodities manufactured by the State itself (*panyādhyaksha*), (10) forest products under the supervision of the *kupyādhyaksha*, (11) balances, weights and other measurements under the *mānādhyaksha*, (12) collections of tolls and customs and other taxes under the *śulkyādhyaksha*,



(14) weaving under *sūtrādhyaksha*, (15) agriculture under *śītādhyaksha*, (16) liquor under *surādhyaksha*, (17) prostitutes or harlotry under *gaṇikādhyaksha*, (18) ferries and fleet under *nāvādhyaksha*, (19) cattle, horses, elephants, chariots and foot-soldiers under *go'adhyaksha* and other superintendents, (20) pasturage under *vivītādhyaksha* and (21) salt business which was a state monopoly. We cannot in this connection forget the Kauṭilyan maxim that sale of commodities at the places (fields or factories) of their production is forbidden (price to be fixed up by Government). Let us now see if we can collect from the *Mahāvastu* any new and additional information about the Indian economic life of the times.

TRADE AND SEA-FARING MERCHANTS

Hundreds of merchants used to leave Jambudvīpa (India) by setting sail on the great ocean in sea-going vessels to seek for wealth by trade. Monstrous fish often caused ship-wreck. Floats of various kinds such as jars, planks, rafts etc. are found mentioned as being used by men during the breaking up of sea-vessels. People during ship-wreck used series of bottle-gourd (अलावुश्रेणियो). Stories of sirens on such occasions are also read in the book, who entice merchants to their own abodes and later imprison them in their strongholds. But they are sometimes, as the story goes, taken across in safety, by a fabulous horse-king, named Keśin, coming from the land of Uttarakuru, on the *Karttika-pūrṇimā* day, who reaches the ship-wrecked merchants to Jambudvīpa. Those who cannot escape are devoured by the sirens. During ship-wreck, as is natural with those who fall into such disaster, the wrecked merchants call upon the devas they believe in—some calling on Śiva, others on Vaiśravaṇa, others on Śkanda and Varuṇa, some on Yama and others on Kuvera, others again on thousand-eyed Virūḍhaka and yet others on Śakra, Brahmā, Dīśā; and this is all for escape alive from the sea.

TRADE IN HORSES

Many ancient kings had in their royal stable hundreds of fleet horses of Sindhu country and with trained horses from Kamboja country. These two were birth-place of



good horses. In the *Śyāmā-Jātaka* as told in the *Mahāvastu* we read that a horse-dealer named Vajrasena traded on horses coming down from Takshaśilā even upto Banaras for selling horses.

It is very interesting to know that there occur two nearly parallel passages in the *Mahāvastu* (III. 112-114 and III. 442-443) wherein we have an authoritative list of various artisans, craftsmen and guilds of tradesmen and manufacturers, prevailing in the early economic life of India. These references may serve, to a very great extent, as supplementary information to those scholars who write on 'Economic Life in Ancient India'. The two occasions that gave rise to the insertion of such a list by the compiler or compilers of the treatise were the two receptions to Lord Buddha accorded respectively by his father, Śuddhodana, at Kapilavastu and by King Bimbisāra at the Magadhan capital, Rājagriha, on his visits thereto after his attainment of perfect enlightenment. Both the rulers wanted to go forward to greet the Lord in the company of all sorts of their subject-people including the Brāhmaṇas and the house-holders (*Brāhmaṇa-grihapati-kehi*), all the parties of musicians (*gāndharvikehi*), all workers on arts and crafts (*śilpāyatanehi*) and the trading or commercial guilds or corporations (*śreṇīhi*). A proclamation was made to that effect by order of the ministers of both these kings in various squares (quadrangles), high-road junctions and market-places (*chatvara-śyīṅgātaka-antarāpaṇa-mukhesu*). On hearing of this proclamation there assembled near the palace-gate (*rājakula-dvāre*) along with the members of the Council of hereditary ministers (*kumārāmātya-parishadyāḥ*), the military chiefs (*bhaṭabalāgrāḥ*), the Brāhmaṇas with the Royal Priest at the head (*purohitapramukhā Brāhmaṇāḥ*), the people of the trade-centres, i.e., the merchant-people with their chief, the *Śreshṭhins* at the head (*śreshṭhipramukha nigama* or *vaṇig-grāma*) and other trading people with their caravan-chief at the head (*sarthavāhapramukha vaṇig-grāma*) and the eighteen kinds of *śreṇis* or guilds. It may be remarked in passing that the words *śreshṭhin*, *sārvavāha* and *kumārāmātya* in these passages of the *Mahāvastu* remind us of their occurrence in the Damodarpur copper-plate documents of the Gupta period discovered by us in North Bengal nearly 43 years ago,



The passages under reference contain a list of three large categories of trading-people, as follows:—

Category I—The *Gāndharvikas* (musicians and players on various musical instruments)—

- (1) *chakrika* (the discus-holders or wheel-players, who exhibit tricks by discus or wheel);
- (2) *vaitālika* (the court-minstrels whose duty is to awaken kings, princes or chiefs at dawn with music and song);
- (3) *naṭa* (the actors or gesticulators);
- (4) *narttika* (the dancers);
- (5) *ṛilla* (the players of a particular instrument; or cymbal-players, prize-fighters; drummers, if the reading be *jhallā*);
- (6) *malla* (the athletes, wrestlers, performers of gymnastic exercises);
- (7) *pāṇi-svarika* or *paṇi-svanika*? (the players of musical instruments through hands, or the palm-strikers, the players clapping their palms);
- (8) *śobhika* (clowns wearing decorations; jugglers, if the reading be *saubhika*);
- (9) *laṅghika* (tumblers doing acrobatic feats, performers of leaping, jumping or mounting exercises by means of bamboos and ropes);
- (10) *kumbha-tūṇika* (has the word anything to do with players with jars and quivers?);
- (11) *velāmbaka* (exhibitors of pendulous, hanging or oscillating exercises; if the reading be *viḍambaka*, the meaning is performers of mimicries);
- (12) *dvistala-bhāṇaka* (meaning obscure; perhaps the word is *dvistrika-bhāṇaka*, a kind of reciters or proclaimers who amuse others by uttering the same thing in two or three sounding ways);
- (13) *pañchavaṭuka* (obscure; perhaps players playing with five young chaps);
- (14) *gāyanaka* (singers);
- (15) *bhāṇḍavika* (players of a musical instrument called *bhāṇḍa*, or those given to buffooneries);
- (16) *bheri-saṁkha-mṛidaṅga-paṭahika* (music-players through kettle-drums, conches or trumpets, tabors and war-drums);



- (17) *tūṇava-panava-veṇu-vallakī-ekadaśī-viṇā-vādaka* [players on the musical instruments called *tūṇava* (meaning obscure), *panava* (small drums or tabors), *veṇu* (flutes or pipes), *vallakī* (a kind of lute or guitar), *ekadaśī* (Is it any one-stringed instrument?), and *viṇā* (the famous Indian lute) and many other *vādyakas* (players on musical instruments);
- (18) *guṇavarta* (those who play with ropes);
- (19) *tāṇḍavika* (the performers of *tāṇḍava* or frantic or violent dance of Śiva);
- (20) *chetayika* (obscure; does it mean men who can produce emotions in others' mind by words or gestures?); and
- (21) *gaṇikā* (harlots or courtesans who used to attend these parties of musicians).

Category II—The *Śreṇīs* (the corporate bodies of traders, or guilds of industrial manufacturers):—

- (1) *sauvarṇika* (goldsmiths);
- (2) *hairanyika* (dealers in gold, silver and other precious metals, i.e., the bullion-dealers; according to some assayers of gold etc.);
- (3) *prāvāraka* (makers of cloaks, or cloak-dealers);
- (4) *maṇiprastāraka* (gem-setters; *prastāraka*, dealers in precious stones, jewellers);
- (5) *maṇikāra* (jewellers or lapidaries, gem-engravers);
- (6) *śaṃkhika* (makers of conch-shell articles);
- (7) *dantakāraka* (makers of ivory articles, ivory carvers);
- (8) *gandhika* (perfumers);
- (9) *kośāvika* (workers in silk-worms?);
- (10) *tailika* (oil-manufacturers, oilmen);
- (11) *ghṛitakuṇḍika* (dealers in ghee or clarified butter in pots);
- (12) *gaulika* i.e., *gaudika* (dealers in molasses or rums);
- (13) *vārika* (probably dealers of vessels for holding spirituous liquors);
- (14) *kārpāsika* (cotton-dealers);
- (15) *dadhyika* (dealers in coagulated or sour milk, or curd);
- (16) *pūpika* (cake-makers);
- (17) *khaṇḍakāraka* (makers of candied sugar);
- (18) *modakakāraka* (sweet-meat makers, confectioners);



- (19) *kaṇḍaka* (*kāṇḍaka?*, cane or reed workers, or arrow-makers);
- (20) *samitākāraka* (*samitākāraka?*, grinders of wheat-flour);
- (21) *saktukāraka* (or *śaktukāraka*, makers of barley flours, or flours of other bread corns or cereals);
- (22) *phalavāṇija* (fruiterers or dealers in fruits);
- (23) *mūlavāṇija* (dealers in plant-roots);
- (24) *chūrṇakutṭa* (powder-makers, those doing pulverizing work);
- (25) *gandhatailika* (dealers in perfumed oils);
- (26) *aṭṭavāṇija* (dealers in or sellers of boiled rice);
- (27) *āgrivāṇiya* (meaning obscure);
- (28) *ābiddhaka* (perhaps, perforators, pore-makers or metal drillers);
- (29) *gudapāchaka* (cookers of raw sugar or molasses or treacles);
- (30) *khaṇḍapāchaka* (cookers of sugar candies);
- (31) *śuṇṭhika* (vendors in dry gingers);
- (32) *sīdhukāraka* (makers of rum, or distilled spirit);
- (33) *madhukāraka* (honey-gatherers, or makers of intoxicating drinks or wines);
- (34) *śarkarāvāṇija* (sugar-merchants or dealers in refined sugar); and such other *vyavahārikas* (business-men).

Category III—The *Śilpāyatanas* (the artisans and craftsmen):—

- (1) *lohakāraka* (blacksmith);
- (2) *tāmra-kutṭa* (copper-smiths);
- (3) *suvarṇakāra* (goldsmiths; also probably makers of gold coins named *suvarṇas*);
- (4) *taddhukāra* (meaning obscure; shakers of gold dust? If the reading be *tardukāraka*, it may mean 'makers of wooden bowls');;
- (5) *pradhvopaka* (*prachchopaka*, *pradhvāpaka?* (manufacturers of articles by means of blowing pipes);
- (6) *roshiṇa* (*roshiṇya*, testers of precious metals by rubbing them on touch-stones?);
- (7) *trapukāraka* (tin-smiths);
- (8) *sīsa-pichchakāraka* (makers of lead-sheets);
- (9) *yantrakāraka* (makers of tools and instruments);
- (10) *mālākāra* (garland-makers, florists);



- (11) *purimakāra* (obscure; if taken as *parṇikāra* it may mean 'vendors of betel leaves');
- (12) *kumbhakāra* (potters);
- (13) *chormakāra* (dealers in leather and hide goods, tanners shoe-makers);
- (14) *kandukāra* (oven-makers, boiler-makers?);
- (15) *ūrṇavāyaka* (weavers of woollen threads);
- (16) *varūtha-tantravāyaka* (weavers of coats of mail);
- (17) *rakta-rajaka* (dyers);
- (18) *devatā-tantra-vāya* (makers of robes for deities or idols);
- (19) *chailadhovaka* (washers of garments, laundrymen);
- (20) *rajaka* (washermen);
- (21) *śuchika* (probably *suchika* or *sauchika*, tailors or workers in embroidery with needles);
- (22) *tantravāya* (cloth-weavers);
- (23) *tūlavāya* (cotton spinners or weavers);
- (24) *chitrakāra* or *chitrakāraka* (painters);
- (25) *vardhaki-rūpakāraka* (carpenters and carvers of images, or portrait-makers);
- (26) *kālapātrika* (*kālapāchika*? resin or pitch-makers);
- (27) *peśalaka* or *pelalaka* (beautifiers? one reading is *śela-laka* bitumen workers? some suggest the reading as *peṭakāraka*, basket-makers);
- (28) *pustakakāraka* or *pustakāraka* (transcribers of books or manuscripts, copyists);
- (29) *pustakarmakāraka* (plasterers, model-makers in plastic substances, or workers in clay, wood or metal?);
- (30) *nāpita* (barbers);
- (31) *kalpika*, *kalpaka* (toilet-makers, hair-dressers);
- (32) *chhedaka* (wood-cutters or mowers of crop-plants or grasses);
- (33) *lepaka* (brick-layers or plasterers, masons);
- (34) *sthapati-sūtradhāraka* (architects and carpenters);
- (35) *uptakoshṭhakāraka* (store-keepers of agricultural products, keepers of granaries);
- (36) *kūpakhanaka* (well-diggers; or, according to some, miners);
- (37) *mṛittikāvāhaka* (earth-carrying labourers);
- (38) *kāshṭhavāhaka* (wood-carrying labourers; the reading *kāshṭhavāṇija* is better, meaning wood-merchants);



- (39) *triṇavāṇija* (dealers in straw and straw-made articles);
- (40) *valkalavāṇija* (bark-merchants);
- (41) *stambavāṇija* (dealers in grass and shrubs);
- (42) *vaṁśavāṇija* (bamboo-merchants);
- (43) *nāvika* (boatsmen or sailors);
- (44) *oḍumpika* (or *olumpika*, raftsmen or those crossing a river etc. by means of rafts);
- (45) *suvarṇadhovaka* (workers clearing gold-dust by washing away dirt); and
- (46) *moṭṭika* (crushers, grinders or breakers; *mauṣṭika*, not a happy reading in this context, for, it means tricksters, sharpers, cheats or rogues—a dishonest occupation).

From the above lists in the *Mahāvastu* containing 101 items we can have a splendid idea of the economic condition of the people in early period of Indian history.



III

Religious Aspect

To speak of anything about the religious aspect of the Indian people of the *Mahāvastu* period is to tell you mostly on the prevailing *dharma* (i.e., Buddhism) at the time. As I referred to in my first lecture that the *Mahāvastu* contains mostly all the important episodes of the Buddha's life and teachings and also some of his Jātaka stories, old and new, so in this my last lecture I shall deal only with some particular topics on religious matters believed by the *Mahāvastu* period people, for one can hardly expect to deal with all topics exhaustively in one lecture.

I have hinted before that the *Mahāvastu* is by itself a pre-eminently religious treatise at the initial stage of Mahāyāna Buddhism. So I wish firstly to give you briefly my impression of the nature of the influence of Mahāyāna on the poet-philosopher Aśvaghoṣa's mind while he was depicting the life and career of Gautama Buddha in his famous Sanskrit epics, the *Buddhacharita*, the *Saundarānanda* and his drama (discovered in fragments), the *Śāriputra-prakarana*.

Aśvaghoṣa is regarded by scholars as one of the earliest exponents of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In order to enable us to understand the *Mahāvastu* tenets, I give below some of the Mahāyāna ideas that can be traced in the books of this great Buddhist teacher and writer. We find explicit and implicit reference to—(1) the stress laid on Buddha-*bhakti*, the Master being an object of devotion and worship to His devotees; (2) the deification of Buddha who should be regarded as a god above all gods, as it is thought by the Mahāyānists that Gautama Buddha is the *rūpa-kāya*, material body, or *nirmāṇa-kāya*, created body, of the real Buddha; (3) the Bodhisattva's glory almost too difficult to be borne, as his mother Māyā-devī died soon after his birth, being unable to bear the excess of joy on account of the glory of the son; (4) the excessive use of the miraculous element in the legends and episodes of the Bodhisattva's career, examples of which are copious even in the *Mahāvastu*; (5) the importance of thinking about the



vanity of existence, renunciation and abandonment of all desires and cravings, and firm resolve of the Bodhisattva to attain *parinirvāṇa* (emancipation from individual existence) by causing extinction of all re-births and regarding the world as *anitya* (transient or impermanent); (6) the dedication of the Bodhisattva's life in his several existences (as also illustrated in the Jātaka stories) to the service and welfare of humanity, He being anxious to deliver the distressed world from the sea of misery by means of his raft of knowledge; (7) the refutation of some of the Brāhmaṇical religious thoughts and practices (specially performance of severe austerities and sacrifices of different kinds), as He thought that *nivṛitti-dharma* was quite a different thing from *pravṛitti-dharma*; and (8) the gradual development of the *anātma-vāda* and *śūnyatā* (both *pudgala-śūnyatā* and *dharma-śūnyatā* i.e., the non-existence not only of any *ātman* or *pudgala* or individuality, but also of the objective world), the main idea being that the *kshetrajñā* or the individual soul always remains *prasava-dharmā* and *bīja-dharmā* and cannot totally discard the triad of *ajñāna*, *karma*, and *trishṇā* and attain the state of *ākiñchanya*.

The above Mahāyānic ideas will be partly illustrated in my discourse on similar and other points as culled by me from my study of the *Mahāvastu*. But yet before doing the same I cannot but offer certain other preliminary remarks on the great Gautama Buddha's personality and the philosophical atmosphere in His time prevailing in India. It must be acknowledged that the early Buddhist scholars, Brāhmaṇa and non-Brāhmaṇa, first acquired the Vedic lore including that of the Upanishadic doctrines, because without a good knowledge of those, it is difficult to understand properly the Buddha and Buddhism. Why did the Buddha rebel against Brāhmaṇic Hinduism and how far did he differ from the tenets and doctrines of the Vedic religion and Upanishadic philosophy? These are questions which cannot be fully answered in this lecture, but may occasionally be referred to in a critical mood. But it may be remarked that the Buddha was a dynamic personality. He was universal love, kindness, and perfect wisdom personified. Being a great rationalist in philosophical thoughts and conceptions, He always appealed to reason (*yukti*) while analysing human ventures in search



for the ultimate Truth (*tathā* or *tathatā*) or Reality. The whole world regards him as a great master of moral force, a great renouncer, and a supreme physician for healing human diseases of passions and torments. Let us form an idea of the philosophical atmosphere which the Buddha found himself in at his own time. The chief religious and philosophical system that prevailed in our country in pre-Buddhistic age was that of the Upanishads and therein we observe more emphasis being laid on knowledge (*jñāna*) than on actions or works (*karma*) such as the Vedic ritualistic institutions including performance of sacrifices (*yajñas*) in which sacrificial slaughter of animals was involved. Even in Buddha's own time these ceremonials did not fully cease to work on people's mind, though the first impact on Vedic *karmakāṇḍa* inflicted by the Upanishadic spiritual teachings had commenced to be felt somewhat earlier. The revolt against such *karma* came, however, to have a powerful influence on men's mind when the Buddha began to preach his sermons after his attainment of perfect enlightenment or *sambodhi* in his thirty-fifth year. But in this hostility against the Brāhmaṇic cult of ritualistic *karma*, the Ājīvika, the Nirgrantha (the Jainā) and the Lokāyata schools of philosophy which were current in Buddha's own time joined their hands to some extent. It is known that the Ājīvika sect of which Gośāla Maṅkhadiputra was the founder believed in the doctrine of *niyati* (predestination or fate) according to which all phenomena, physical or mental, are unalterably fixed or ordained; and the members of this sect cherished no faith in human efforts or exertions (*purushakāra*). The Jaina sect founded on a strong basis by the great Mahāvīra accepted harmlessness or abstinence from violence or doing injury to others, in thought, word or deed. The third chief leader, contemporary of the Buddha, was *Keśakambalin*, a materialist and unbeliever in God or Soul and probably inclined to the Lokāyata system of Chārvāka in which also we find its adherents rejecting the authority of the Vedas and refraining from performing all the Brāhmaṇic ceremonials and sacrifices and also denying the doctrine of transmigration and salvation acknowledged by the Brāhmaṇic systems. To these materialists matter only counted, and soul was understood by them to be body with only the



attribute of intelligence (*dehātma-vādin*). They also denied the existence of all that transcends the senses and salvation to them was only the dissolution of the body which was nothing but a combination of the gross elements. Orthodox Hinduism received a severe handling from the Lokāyatas and the early Buddhists. There was another prominent religious leader in Buddha's time, a Brāhmaṇa preacher, named Sañjayin, the head of the Parivrājaka sect, who had for his disciples both Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana before their complete renunciation and ordination to Buddhism, and their becoming two most famous, beloved and devoted disciples of the Buddha. This Sañjayin was rather a sceptic cherishing doubt in the solution of the philosophical problems, such as, whether the world is permanent or impermanent, whether there is continuity of life or self after a man's death, whether the world has its beginning or it is beginningless, etc. To the Gautama Buddha the above-mentioned sectarian tenets and doctrines seemed to be unsatisfactory, unreasonable and unappealing, though they severally made strong impress on his mind in some respects.

Against this back-ground I wish now to draw a picture of some religious topics, discussed and referred to in the great *Mahāvastu-avadāna*. First, I take up the subject of repudiation of Brāhmaṇic fire-sacrifice, austerities and penances. Once in the topic of conversion by Buddha of Śreṇya King Bimbisāra, ruling both in Magadha and Aṅga (jointly) from his capital at Rājagṛiha (III. 436 ff), when the Master after having been perfectly enlightened, was staying at Uruvilva, at the foot of the Goatherd's (*Ajapāla's*) Banyan-tree on the banks of the Nairāñjanā river, we find Uruvilvā-Kāśyapa being asked by the Lord as to why he had abandoned the sacred fire-sacrifice, austerities and penances. Kāśyapa said in reply that in a sacrifice¹ men speak of food and drink, and sweets of sensual pleasures and even women, but he knew of what is dross among attachments and he, therefore, took no delight in sacrifice and offering. Then on Buddha's enquiry as to what better thing in the world of devas and men on

¹ "अन्नानि पानानि अथो रसानि, कामां स्त्रियो चाभिवर्द्धन्ति यज्ञे ।

एतं मलं ति उपधीषु ज्ञात्वा, तस्मान्न यज्ञे न हुते रमामि ॥" III. 444



which his heart was set Kāśyapa replied saying¹ that when he had seen the Lord (Sage) calm, free from all substrate of re-birth, possessing nothing, rid of all attachments to existence, unchanging and not led by others, then he lost all delight in sacrifice and offering. He then repented that he previously did offer the fire-sacrifice and made his penance in vain and that he foolishly believed that man could be freed by fire-sacrifice and offerings and that he, being unable to see the perfect immovable state, had blindly followed after birth and death. He then added that the Lord having clearly revealed to him the pure, perfect and complete state, he had been able to escape from the round of birth and death. He also stated that so long he was found in the chains of wrong belief from which the Exalted One had now set him free. Many men, he said, were lost through performance of diverse austerities as they could not pass beyond doubt. The Brāhmaṇas and householders of Magadha then realized that Uruvilvā-Kāśyapa was really living the *brahmacharya* life under the recluse, Gautama Buddha.

Such repudiation of Vedic sacrifices which commenced so strongly from the time of Buddha later found an echo in some of the edicts of Aśoka in which the emperor showed abundant respect for the sanctity of life and raised a strong indictment against the slaughter of animals for sacrifice (*anālamḥa* of *prāṇas*). The *Mahāvastu* expressed such a repudiation in a story (II. 95 ff.) which briefly runs thus—there was a king named Suchandrima ruling at Sindhapura (perhaps in the Punjab) and he was very friendly with his neighbouring king, named Subāhu, of Hastināpura. Suchandrima once prepared for the performance of a great sacrifice (*mahāyajña*) in which he wanted to offer every kind of animal, living on land and in water. At his command the hunters and fishermen of his kingdom brought all sorts of living beings—the land animals being shut up in a large enclosure (*jajñavāṭa*) and the fishes confined in a tank. The king also managed to obtain a beautiful Kinnarī named Manoharā, daughter of Druma, the King of Kinnaras from the Kailāśa mount,

¹ “दृष्ट्वा मुनिं शान्तमनुषधीकं, अकिंचनं सर्वभवेष्ट्यसक्तं ।

अनन्ययाभावमनन्यनेयं, तस्मात्तं यष्टे न दुते रमामि ” III. 445.



caught by a hunter and brought to Simhapura, a city of Brāhmaṇas and put in the sacrificial enclosure. Invitation to the sacrifice was issued to king Subāhu of Hastināpura and several hundred other kings. King Subāhu sent to the sacrifice his only son, named Sudhanu, as his representative. This prince (Sudhanu) saw in the sacrificial enclosures many thousands of living beings, both land and water animals, as well as the Kinnarī, Manoharā. On the prince's asking for the reason of confining so many living beings in the sacrificial enclosure, king Suchandrima answered saying—"With these animals I shall perform a sacrifice and there will thus be plenty of solid and soft food" ("एतेहि यज्ञं यजिष्यामि, एतेन च प्रभूतेन खादनीय-भोजनीयेन"). Then follows a harsh criticism of sacrifice made by Sudhanu who sharply asked Suchandrima as to whether any good and profit would accrue from such a sacrifice which consists in slaughtering all those living beings. The Brāhmaṇic way of reply of king Suchandrima in praise of such a sacrifice was this—"All these living beings that will be slaughtered in the sacrifice will attain heaven. As regards myself I shall be reborn in heaven as many times as are equal to the number of the slaughtered animals." Prince Sudhanu replied in a Buddhistic mood saying² thus—"Your Majesty, this is not so, this is a wrong view (*mithyā-dṛishṭi*) for, *ahiṃsā* (not to cause harm or injury) is the highest rule. To take life is not *dharma*, but to abstain from taking life is *dharma*. . . Wrong belief is not *dharma*, but right belief is *dharma*." The Prince then added saying—"Your Majesty, those who take to the path of the ten right actions (*kuśala-karma*) are re-born in heaven. In the matter (of the great sacrifice), the path followed by your Majesty is not the path

¹ "एते यत्तका प्राणजातो अत्र यज्ञे हनिष्यन्ति सर्वे स्वर्गं गमिष्यन्ति ।

अहं च यत्तका एते प्राणा एत्थ यज्ञे हनिष्यन्ति तत्तकां चारां स्वर्गं उपपद्यामि"

II. 99.

² महाराज न एवं एतं, मिथ्यादृष्टि एषा, अहिंसा परमं धर्मं ।

प्राणातिपातो अधर्मो, प्राणातिपातवैरमणो धर्मो मिथ्यादृष्टि अधर्मो सम्यग्दृष्टि धर्मो दशहि कुशलेहि कर्मपथेहि समन्वागताः सत्त्वा स्वर्गेषूपपद्यन्ति । तदेवं महाराजेन न एष स्वर्गार्थां पथो गृहीतो, नरकेषु गमनाय एष पथो गृहीतो" II. 99.



to heaven, but it is the path that leads to hell." Suchandrima, the other kings and the great mass of people present in the function were pleased to hear this exposition of the *dharma* by prince Sudhanu. The result was that the king of Simhapura let out all the living beings—both the land and water animals. Such was the Buddhist diatribe against sacrifices in the *Mahāvastu*. As instructed by prince Sudhanu, king Suchandrima of Simhapura offered an unimpeded and flawless sacrifice in which thousands of Śramaṇas, Brāhmaṇas, poor people and supplicants were fully given food and drink and were clothed in good garments. Doing so he proved that such kind of service was the proper sacrifice (or *yajña*).

THE ORDINATION OF ŚĀRĪPUTRA AND MAUDGALYĀYANA

The most important topic of the conversion of Śārīputra and Maudgalyāyana, as described and discussed in the *Mahāvastu* which also contains the stories of many other ordinations, is related here for a clear knowledge of the processes of such a ceremony held by the early Buddhists. The Buddha, whose missionary career was just begun, was living, after his return from Banaras, in the precincts of the Magadhan capital, Rājagṛiha. The conversion story of these two great disciples of the Buddha, as depicted in the Pali book, differs to some extent from the one told in the *Mahāvastu* in certain details. In the Nālandā-grāmaka, a very prosperous and developed village, situated within half a *yojana* from Rājagṛiha, there lived a very rich Brāhmaṇa who had a beautiful and charming wife, named Śārī. She bore seven sons, the youngest of whom was named Upatishya, ever unmarried (अनाविष्ट) and a student of Vedic *mantras* in his preceptor's home (गुरुकुल). In another such rich, prosperous and populous village named Kolita-grāmaka situated also within half a *yojana* of Rājagṛiha there lived another Brāhmaṇa of great affluence, who had a son named Kolita, very pure, learned skilful and intelligent. He also read Vedic scriptures in the same *gurukula* where they both had five hundred fellow-students. Upatishya and Kolita were the surnames of Śārīputra and Maudgalyāyana respectively. These two young Brāhmaṇas were very happy and close friends and



they exchanged constant visits between their two native villages. Their teacher's name was Sañjayin (Vairāṭiputra) belonging to the Parivrājaka sect. Once the two friends went to see the Giriyagrasamāja—the annual festival in which hundreds of shows, choruses, dancers, actors and drummers join in merriment. But as both Upatishya and Kolita had now acquired all the attributes entitling them for initiation into the doctrine of all the previous Samyak-Sambuddhas (perfectly Enlightened Ones) and also attained power to understand the causes of all things and became fit for the performance of all Āryadharmā injunctions in this their last birth (“आर्यधर्माणां आराधनायै चरमभविष्यायै हेतुप्रत्ययचारिका सत्त्वा” । III. 57), there arose, after seeing the sights in the festival and also the crowd of people assembled there, in the mind of Śārīputra (Upatishya) the conception of the impermanence of the world, this transient existence, and also in the mind of Maudgalyāyana (Kolita) the conception of all things being nothing but bones. In spite of his associate's request to Śārīputra that he should not feel sorry at this time of gladness and merriment in the *samāja*, Śārīputra replied saying that that was rather the time to live by *dharma*. Those people, according to him, were attached to worldly objects of enjoyment which are fleet and they, with their greedy desires unsatiated, forget that they will very soon have to depart from the world and be reduced to ashes. So he advocated to Maudgalyāyana that the course of renunciation was his desired objective. On hearing this said, Kolita promised to adopt the same path as his friend wanted to traverse, and he uttered a verse which states—“The way you prefer appeals to me also, and even death is more welcome to me by remaining in your company than life without yourself” (“या गती भवती दुष्टा अस्माकमपि रोचते । त्वया सार्धं मृतं श्रेयं न च जीवितं त्वया विना” ॥ III. 59). So both of them proceeded to the grove of the Parivrājakas and received there from Sañjayin the vow of renunciation (*parivrājaka-pravrajyā*). Śārīputra was able to master all the lore of the Parivrājakas within one week since his *pravrajyā* and Maudgalyāyana did so within a fortnight. The two friends then discussed between themselves thus—“This *dharma* (of the Parivrājakas) cannot lead us to emancipation or cessation of all ills. So we should independently try to



acquire *dharma-vinaya* (well-preached discipline of the *dharma*) that may conduce to the end of all miseries." They then stipulated between themselves that whoever of the two would first attain *dharma-vinaya* should communicate the same to the other, so that they would together renunciate the world by being initiated to Āryadharmavinaaya. They then entered the city of Rājagṛiha by different ways. At that time Lord Gautama was residing with a retinue of 6,500 *Bhikshus* in the Bamboo Grove at Kalandaka-nivāpa. Śārīputra beheld from a distance the venerable monk named Upasena (not Aśvajit as in Pali books) proceeding in search of food with his begging bowl, wearing his yellow robe. He felt highly contented in mind at the sight of the monk and considered this mendicant's wandering in renunciation as a blessed thing (III. 60). He asked Upasena saying thus—"Are you, venerable Sir, a teacher (*sāstā*) or a disciple (hearer, *śrāvaka*)?" Forthwith came the reply—"I am a disciple". Śārīputra then enquired thus—"Would you kindly tell me as to what doctrine or tenet your own teacher follows, and what does he say to and instruct his disciples and whether his exhortations have spread far and wide?" Upasena wanted to tell Śārīputra only the real significant portion (*arthamātra*) of his Master's teaching, as he was himself a man of little learning (*alpāśruta*). The questioner also desired to know the spirit (*artha*) and not the form (*vyāñjana*) of the teachings, because he and many others had long deceived themselves by merely un-meaning words of scriptural books. Upasena also told Śārīputra that his Master taught people about all *dharma*s or phenomena as depending on a Law of Causation and instructed them to abandon all desired objects ("प्रतीत्यसमुत्पन्नां धर्मां जलवायुष्मन् शास्ता उपादाय प्रतिनिःसर्गं विज्ञपेति" III. 61). On hearing this, Śārīputra's mind at once became clear of all impurities and his pure spiritual eye opened up, and he at once attained *dharma*, threw off false views (*prahīṇa-dṛishṭi*), overcame all doubts (*tīṛṇa-kāṁksha*), discontinued questionings (*vigata-kathamkatha*), came to possess an upright, kind and diligent mind (*riyuchitta*, *myiduchitta*, *karmaṇiyachitta*) and acquired proneness and aim towards *nirvāṇa*, the eternal blissful state (*nirvāṇa-pravaṇa*, *nirvāṇa-pragbhāra*). Upasena then directed Śārīputra towards Kalandaka-nivāpa at Veṇuvana where the Master was at that time residing



and himself went on his alms-round in the city of Rājagṛīha. But Śārīputra went first to Maudgalyāyana who saw his associate coming towards him with a calm and serene countenance and who ejaculated saying "O you, Śārīputra, it appears you have attained *amṛita*, that immortal state of bliss, and also the path that leads to it (*amṛitamadhigataṁ amṛita-gāminīcha mārgaḥ* III. 61) and this is why you look so doubly bright and effulgent." "You are right in your guess; I have really attained *amṛita* and the path that leads to it. There has arisen the Light of the world (*Loka-pradyota*)"—thus replied Śārīputra. Maudgalyāyana then enquired from his associate about what the Teacher teaches. Śārīputra answered and said

“ये धर्मा हेतुप्रभवा हेतुन्तेषां तथागतो आह ।

तेषां च यो निरोध एवंबादो महाश्रमणः” ॥ III. 62.

i.e., “The Tathāgata has proclaimed the cause and also the cessation of all things or phenomena which are born of causes. The Great Śramaṇa is the holder of such a doctrine.” On hearing this uttered by his comrade, Maudgalyāyana also attained his spiritual eye (*dharma-chakshu*) and felt himself fit for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. He was told also of the whereabouts of the Master. Maudgalyāyana wanted not to take leave of their former preceptor, Sañjayin, saying that they should go direct to the Master and not see any more Sañjayin with his corrupt view. But Śārīputra reminded his associate that they must see him before they proceed to live the religious life under Gautama, the Great Recluse, as their previous preceptor had done them a great service since through him they had given up the householders' life. So they both went to Sañjayin who requested them not to leave him, and the five hundred disciples of his, belonging to the Parivrājaka sect. But they told their former preceptor that they intended to take ordination from Lord Gautama who had witnessed directly what is called *dharma-vinaya* and propagated the same to all quarters. They, as seekers after true faith, could not disbelieve Him. To the extreme regret of Sañjayin his five hundred followers also left that sect and went away with Śārīputra and Maudgalyāyana. Buddha intuitively knew that they both were coming to Him with the five hundred wanderers and the Tathāgata declared that one of the two



(meaning Śārīputra) would be the leading monk among the great intellectuals and the other (meaning Maudgalyāyana) the leading monk among those who possess supernatural powers ("एको अश्वो महाप्राज्ञानां अवरो अश्वो महर्षिकानाम्" III. 63).

Śārīputra saw Lord Buddha from a distance teaching the pure and perfect *dharma* to a large crowd, looking endowed with the eighteen special supernatural powers (*āveṇikas*), the ten powers (*balas*) and the four expertnesses (*vaiśārādyas*), with his faculties and mind controlled, a veritable second rising sun, a cynosure of all eyes, like one crossing over to the shore of emancipation and securing all bliss—a Śramaṇa beyond evil, a Brāhmaṇa, a Śrotriya (a learned man), and a *snātaka* (a student who has concluded his studies). Such was the glorified state in which the Lord was seen by Śārīputra. Then the great new-comers accompanied by the five hundred followers approached the Buddha and bowed their heads at his feet. Śārīputra addressed the Lord thus—"O Ascetic, we have so long dwelt (as it were) in waters of the ocean, in caves of hills and in glades and wood. Through lack of sight of yourself in person, we have long lived among false heretics. O you, the great Caravan-leader, now having receded from the wrong path we have crossed over in faith to your way and having traversed the wilderness of worldly life have become wise and passionless and are no longer moved by attachment." Both Śārīputra and Maudgalyāyana then begged of Lord Sugata to admit them as recluses ("प्रव्रानेतु मां भगवानुपसंपादेतु मां सुगतो" III. 64-65) and ordain them. The Lord then ordained them both and the five hundred other Wanderers by uttering the formula of "Come, monks" ("एहिभिक्षुकाये आभाषे" III. 65) and also "Come, monks, live the religious life under the Tathāgata" ("एष भिक्षवः चरय तयागते ब्रह्मचर्यम्" III. 65). Then the miracle took place of all their marks—badge, emblem and sign of wanderers—having disappeared, and of the appearance of the three

"उषितं सागरसलिले उषितं गिरिगहनकाननवनेषु ।

अवर्शनात् तुह्यं मुने उषिता स्म चिरं कुतीयेषु ॥

कुमार्गा निवृत्ता पथे ते प्रसन्ना महासायंवाह प्रतीर्णा ।

तं संसारकान्तारमुत्तीर्य धीराः विरक्ता न रज्यन्ति भूयः" ॥ III. 64



robes and bowls and their hair in its natural state of recluses; and their deportment then became so established as if they were all monks, ordained a hundred years. This is the special form of renunciation (*pravrajyā*), ordination (*upasampadā*) and entry into the monk's status (*bhikshu-bhāva*) of these two great men and their company of five hundred wanderers.

After this formal ordination Śārīputra put forward some metaphysical queries in reply to which the Master said that four *dhātus*, constituent parts of a being, are predicted about; they exist, disappear, and re-appear by a new birth. In reply to further queries the Lord said that *avidyā*, ignorance, *trishṇā*, desire or craving, and *karma*, action, are the causes of birth; *āyus*, time, *karma*, work, and *āhāra*, food, are the causes of existence. Disappearance or death is caused by the termination of time, the end of actions, and the elimination of food; a being's rebirth is caused by non-escape from ignorance, and by domination exercised by desire which leads actions to ripen. The cessation of rebirths takes place only when a being escapes from nescience, and succeeds in totally annihilating his desires.

The Master also explained to Śārīputra how pleasurable sensations are produced in the sense-organs by the so-called attractive appearance of object-forms. He again referred to the law of causation¹ as producing all phenomena which cause mental pleasure and happiness and which are then said to be born, to exist, to develop, and to become cognizable. But they are, according to him, all non-soul, nor do they partake of anything belonging to any soul; rather they are bereft of any soul, nor do they partake of anything belonging to any soul; rather they are bereft of any soul nor anything belonging to any soul.

On hearing this discourse of the Master, the two great new converts and their followers became absolutely free from

¹“वे शारिपुत्र धर्मा प्रतीत्य उत्सादयन्ति प्रीतिमुखसीमनस्य इन्द्रियाणि च प्रीणयन्ति ते शारिपुत्र धर्मा जाता भूता संस्कृता वेदयिता प्रतीत्य समुत्पन्ना नैवात्मा नैवात्मनीया शून्या आत्मेन वा आत्मनीयेन वा”। III. 66



all miseries, i.e., sins, passions and desires (*āśravas*). Maudgalyāyana acquired within a week of his ordination all supernatural powers (*ṛiddhibalatā* and *ṛiddhivaśitā*) and the four kinds of logical dexterities (*pratisamvidā*) i.e., expertness in the Buddhist theory and practice, etymology, and dialectics. Śāriputra also acquired within a fortnight of his ordination, the power of intuitive knowledge (*abhijñā*), perfection of wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā*) and the four logical dexterities. Maudgalyāyana became able to realize the three knowledges (*vidyās*), obtained a divine eye (*divyaṃ chakṣuḥ*) and began to recollect his former lives (*purvanivāsa*) and attained destruction of all passions and desires (*āśrava-kṣaya*). Such is the tradition and the two saints and their followers, after ordination by the Buddha, succeeded in crossing over the deep forest of birth, decay, death and re-birth. A few words may be said in this connection about the ordination of Mahā-Kāśyapa. Once upon a time Ānanda, the sage of Videha, the favourite disciple of the Lord, who was regarded by all monks and nuns as the Lord's servitor, attendant and recipient of all right rules of conduct direct from the Lord, was touring Magadha accompanied by a large body of five hundred monks and stayed in the Bamboo Grove at Kalandakanivāpa, some of whom betrayed their frailty and renounced Ānanda's teaching. This conduct of the renouncers came to the notice of Mahā-Kāśyapa who sought leave of Ānanda to ask him the question as to why the Lord prohibited *śrāvakas* (disciples) from eating in a crowd (*gaṇa-bhojana*) and prescribed that they should eat in groups of three (*triṇa-bhojana*). Ānanda replied that he and others had come from far away, so he himself was anxious to ask him the same question for its clear interpretation. Mahā-Kāśyapa replied that the Tathāgata made such prohibition for two reasons—the safety of families and breaking of cliques of wicked men—thus avoiding mischief of dispute, wrangling, squabbling and quarrelling in the *Saṅgha*. In course of this talk between the two great *theras*, Mahā-Kāśyapa made a pungent remark that Ānanda acted like a youngster, knowing no moderation and like destroying a good harvest he went the rounds of families for alms along with such a big body of young and fresh troops of fellow-students, newly ordained, having no guard on the



doors of their senses, not vigilant and irresponsible. Ānanda resented the remark by saying that there were grey hairs growing on his head and yet Mahā-Kāśyapa thought it fit to address him as to a youngster. At that time a nun, Sthūlanandā by name, championed Ānanda against Mahā-Kāśyapa who, she remarked, formerly belonged to another sect. The sage told Ānanda that this sister nun spoke out of thoughtlessness and that Ānanda begged pardon of the sage, for womankind was witless, and lacking in knowledge of proper occasion to speak in that way. Mahā-Kāśyapa then reminded Ānanda in protest that he never acknowledged before embracing religious life any master outside of and other than Lord Tathāgata the perfect Buddha and he referred to his renouncing his home with its rich material properties of high earthly value which he regarded as defilements. He said, moreover, that he left home taking only one patched cotton cloak with him and wandered out in quest of Arhans in the world and at that time there was no other Arhan anywhere except the perfect Buddha and after one year of his leaving home he saw the Lord in Rājagṛiha at Bahuputraka shrine (*chetiya*) and the thought crossed his mind that he was looking on the Lord who was all seeing, all-knowing and possessed of absolute perfect knowledge. Then he told Ānanda the short story of his own ordination by the Buddha. He said that approaching the Lord in reverence he addressed him in these words—"Lord, you are my master and I am your disciple, Sugata." The Lord, he spoke to Ānanda, said to him thus in reply—"O Kāśyapa, I am your master and you are my disciple." Then the Tathāgata gave Mahā-Kāśyapa an exhortation on how to train himself to abide by the restraint of the disciplinary rules, pasturing in the field of good conduct and discerning the peril of the minutest faults and also adopting and practising the moral precepts and living a life of complete purity in thought, speech and act. The Lord in this exhortation referred to the fact of the body being not one that is permanently assembled. He also asked Mahā-Kāśyapa to train himself in discerning of the uprising and of the cession of the five *skandhas* on which existence thrives and gave him a lesson on the *pratītya-samutpāda* doctrine. Mahā-Kāśyapa then told the venerable



Ānanda that after he had been given the exhortation, he was a probationer student (*śaiksha*) for eight days only having yet to act before attainment of perfection, but on the ninth day he attained perfect knowledge. Then he reported to Ānanda the exchange of the patched cotton under-robe of his with the under-robe of hempen rags of the Tathāgata. Thus did he become a genuine son of the Lord, born of *dharma* created by *dharma*, an heir as to *dharma* and not as to the flesh. His three knowledges, his six super-knowledges and mastery of the powers could no longer be hidden. After this the five hundred monks in Ānanda's charge harboured no more doubt or mistrust on Mahā-Kāśyapa to whom their obedience became greater and better than before. The depraved nun Sthūlanandā remained, however, un-reconciled and she uncovered herself before Mahā-Kāśyapa and died immediately and on account of her hard-heartedness against the sage was reborn in a great hell—such was the tradition.

THE PRINCIPLES OF TEN BHŪMIS

After the demise of the Buddha Mahā-Kāśyapa became anxious to see that Buddha's religion continues in full glory and that all *bhikṣhus* act upto the behests of the Buddha. At such a time Kāśyapa feared that a schism may arise and sectarians and heretics might harm the peerless doctrine and so he advised them to try to collect the teachings of the Master (संकलिये शासनं शास्तुः, I. 70) and to recite¹ the Sugata's excellent teaching without a break and in perfect unison so that the recital, well and truly made, may long have bright renown among men and gods. Kāśyapa wanted the assembly to remove all doubts about the Master's teaching. He asked the venerable Kātyāyana to speak of the conduct and career of great-hearted kings of *dharma*. In course of his reply regarding the careers of all-seeing Buddhas of unsullied conduct, Kātyāyana told Kāśyapa of the famous *Daśabhūmi* principles now advocated in the *Mahāvastu* (I. 76 ff). The word *bhūmi* literally means 'earth', or ground.

¹ "तेन अम्रतिहताः सुसमग्राः, गायन्त्या सुगतशासनमग्यं ।

यच्च इदं सुपरिगीतं यथार्थं, विरतरं नरमकम् विरोधे ॥" I. 70



The *Mahāvastu* itself defines it by saying (I. 77) that every existence of the Bodhisattvas is shortly defined as an earth, whence has come the name¹ *bhūmi*. As a matter of fact these *bhūmis* are the various stages of development of the qualities of a Bodhisattva towards which he progressively advances. He gradually ascends from one to the next, upto the last or the tenth stage. The *Mahāvastu* gives a very detailed description of these stages which cannot be recounted here. Kātyāyana said to Kāśyapa that it was not possible to measure the *bhūmis* of Bodhisattvas and they last through so many or even infinite *kalpas*. However, the treatise names (I. 76) the different *bhūmis* thus—the first being called *dūrārohā* (difficult to ascend), the second *baddhamānā* (fastening), the third (*pushpa-maṇḍitā* (adorned with flowers), the fourth *ruchirā* (fascinating), the fifth *cittavistārā* (expanding the mind or heart), the sixth *rūpavatī* (lovely), the seventh *durjayā* (hard to conquer), the eighth *janmanideśa* (ascertaining the birth), the ninth deriving its name from *yauvarājya* (anointment or installation as Crown Prince) and the tenth from *abhisheka* (coronation). The transitions from *bhūmi* to *bhūmi* are dealt with fully. The eight rules of conduct (*samudāchārā*) for Bodhisattvas when they live in the first *bhūmi* or stage are these (1) liberality (*tyāga*), (2) compassion (*karuṇā*); (3) indefatigability (*aparikheda*), (4) want of pride i.e., humility (*amāna*), (5) study of all the scriptures (*sarvasāstrādhyāyitā*), (6) heroism (*vikrama*), (7) asking for permission or approval of people (*lokānujñā*) and (8) fortitude (*dhyṛitī*). The Bodhisattvas, in this stage, conceive the idea of attainment of perfect wisdom by accumulation of merits, the roots of goodness. Then with regard to the second *bhūmi*, the dispositions of Bodhisattvas are related to Kāśyapa by Mahā-Kātyāyana saying that Bodhisattvas in the second *bhūmi* feel undoubtedly an aversion to all forms of existence and that herein their dispositions are good (*kal-yāṇādhyāśaya*), amiable (*snigdha*), sweet (*madhura*), keen (*tikṣṇa*), bountiful (*vipula*), charming (*vichitra*), profound (*gambhīra*), not losing control (*aparyādinna*), imperturbable (*anupahata*), extraordinary (*asādhāraṇa*), lofty (*unnata*), noble

“सर्वं संसारो बोधिसत्त्वानां कण्डसंज्ञया भूमिरिति परिकल्पितं
तेन भूमिरिति स्मृता” । I. 77



i.e., not miserable (*akṛipāṇa*), resolute (*anivarta*), sincere (*akṛitṛima*), pure (*śuddha*), steadfast (*dṛiḍha*), independent or free from others' influence (*svabhāva*), contented (*trīpta*), intent on the (foremost) Person (*pudgala*) and infinite (*ananta*). Their lapses in this *bhūmi* are also related, and on account of these lapses they fail to reach the third stage.

Then Mahā-Kātyāyana related to Mahā-Kāśyapa the state of heart existing in Bodhisattvas as they ascend the third stage from the second. He said that their stage of mind becomes herein set on renunciation. They want to make all creatures happy and they do this not for their own well-being, not even for the sake of enlightenment; and they want to buy one verse of a wise saying even with the sacrifice of wives and children. In order to qualify themselves for attaining the fourth *bhūmi* the Bodhisattvas do not create schisms in the *saṅgha*, nor do they raze *stūpas* to the ground, nor do they harbour any evil thoughts against a Tathāgata. They, moreover, are not cast down by adversity, nor elated by prosperity. Then Mahā-Kātyāyana said to Mahā-Kāśyapa during reply to queries that such Bodhisattvas who are not liable to lapse in any way, for any reason, at any time, or by any chance, in their course to the seven other *bhūmis*, never pass into a hell nor are reborn in any brute state, but they are capable of becoming Brahmās, Indras, Nāga kings, universal kings (*chakravartins*), chief counsellors, chief heads of guilds, leaders, royal sons etc. Thus do they bring their career to maturity. In this the fourth *bhūmi* the Bodhisattvas evolve the idea of enlightenment.

Then the *Mahāvastu* expounds and illustrates the merits and demerits of Bodhisattvas in the fifth *bhūmi*. Herein are mentioned the names of some of the Buddhas worshipped by the Lord Gautama when he was in the fifth *bhūmi* and several other universal kings of good merit at their times. In this connexion we have the names of the Buddhas as (1) Yaśa-vrata worshipped by the present Gautama Buddha born as a merchant's son, (2) Sudarśana worshipped by the universal King Dharaṇidhara, (3) Nareśvara worshipped by the universal King Aparājita, (4) Suprabha worshipped by a minister named Vijaya, (5) Tathāgata Ratanaparvata worshipped by a universal King Achyuta, (6) the perfect



Buddha Kaṇakaparvata worshipped by the universal King, Priyadarśana, (7) Lord Pushpadanta worshipped by a king named Durjaya, (8) a Buddha named Lalitavikrama worshipped by King Chaturaṅgabala, (9) Lord Mahāyaśas worshipped by King Mṛigapatiśvara, and (10) Jina Ratana-chūḍa worshipped by a universal king named Maṇivishāṇa. These kings and others offered great gifts to these Jinas and made their vows to them praying that they might themselves become perfect Buddhas and safely lead across all men fallen into the great flood of recurrent births and may live in peace by dragging their minds from all sorts of attachments ("उच्छिन्नमोहजालो प्रसन्नचित्तो असंगप्रतिभानो । तारेय्य सर्वजनतां संसारमोहार्णवे पतितान्" ॥ I. 119).

Regarding questions of the Buddha-field and *upakshetras* with reference to dispositions in the sixth *bhūmi*, Mahā-Kātyāyana said that many fields are not empty of Buddhas and certain others are empty. Buddhas winning perfect knowledge and mindful of welfare of all beings appear very rarely. It is the nature of Buddhas to achieve the whole difficult task of a Buddha, set before him. Sometimes only two Tathāgatas could appear, if one Buddha is not equal to the conditions of Buddhahood. Otherwise no two valiant men are born in one and the same field, as men reject the notion of the inadequate nature of the great seers ("तं चासमर्थसद्भावं वर्जयन्ति महर्षिणः । तस्माद् दुवे न जायन्ते एकक्षेत्रे नरवर्धनौ ॥" I. 122). Buddhas never pass away without fulfilling the Buddha-tasks. Mahā-Kātyāyana then revealed the Buddha-fields in the eastern, southern, western and northern quarters of the world and in its nadir and zenith where Buddhas of various names respectively preach *dharma*. He also replied to the query of Mahā-Kāśyapa as to whether there was possibility of all beings being released by the preaching of so many Buddhas, saying that there cannot be a limit to the countless beings listening to the teaching of the Buddhas, as the average worldlings were numerous, rather more numerous than the numerous worlds.

Lastly, it was said in the book that as the Bodhisattvas in the sixth *bhūmi* sometimes envy those who have won cessation of perception and feeling, they lapse, and cannot advance towards the seventh *bhūmi* or stage.



As the Bodhisattvas advance to the seventh *bhūmi* their mind is bent on self-control. Mahā-Kātyāyana spoke to Mahā-Kāśyapa that the Bodhisattvas preach and commend abstention from killing. After passing through the seven *bhūmis* they show pity to those beings who bemoan their lot, apply themselves to the practice of morality, renounce their kingdoms and powers and go out of home to a homeless condition. In this context Kātyāyana recited some stories regarding Gautama Buddha in his previous lives and illustrated some of his supreme virtues and proved the wicked actions of Devadatta. Such good and difficult acts of body, thought and speech are performed by Bodhisattvas. Of the manifold good qualities they possess, we find mention, in the *Mahāvastu*, of mastery over *karma*, resoluteness, endurance, trustworthiness, uprightness and sincerity. They are generous, firm, gentle, tender, patient, tranquil of heart, brilliantly intelligent, gifted with insight, not given to gratification of sensual pleasures, pure in conduct, full of civility to elderly people, and of persuasive speech, ready to help people in distress, equal in adversity and prosperity, and skilful in uprooting the vices of men. They are anxious to win the sphere of power of a Buddha, skilled in teaching, loving even their enemies. They possess the knowledge of correct and faulty conclusions. Then we find a very beautiful and logical view that all great men working for the benefit and welfare of humanity are so many Bodhisattvas, for the *Mahāvastu* writes that all charms and medicines were discovered by Bodhisattvas, all remedies current in the world were prescribed by them, all sciences devoted to the ascertainment of truth were developed by them, all mathematical calculations and forms of writing in different scripts were introduced by them, and all the mines of gold, silver, copper, lead, precious metals and gems were revealed by them. In short, all expedients that exist for the service of men were their inventions. Mahā-Kātyāyana lastly said that as Bodhisattvas advance from the seventh to the eighth *bhūmi* their hearts become set on great compassion. Then the *Mahāvastu* enumerates the hundreds of names of the previous powerful, renowned and Aryan Buddhas under whom Śākyamuni Buddha acquired the root of merit while he advanced from the first up to the seventh



bhūmi. Then the book mentions again hundreds of the host of Aryan Buddhas in the ninth *bhūmi*. Mahā-Kātyāyana then told Mahā-Kāśyapa regarding those Bodhisattvas who passed through the ninth *bhūmi* and encompassed the tenth after having won to the Tushita-*bhavana* and thence descending to a mother's womb to lead his last human extraordinary existence, not shared by Pratyeka-Buddhas, nor by saints, nor by disciples, nor by average people. The book states how they become conceived in mother's womb, without the intercourse of a father and a mother, but by their own merit only ("स्वगुणनिर्बुत्ता उपपादुका भवन्ति" I. 145). Description is obtained in the book of such great men's wonderful conception, their emergence from mother's womb and their attendance by gods. Mahā-Kāśyapa was told also that these Bodhisattvas are also to practise all the arts of mankind without any help from teachers and they do not indulge in the pleasures of sense. In answer to the former's query as to how Rāhula was born, the latter replied saying that passing away from Tushita heaven he came down into the womb of his mother Yaśodharā, the Kshatriya maiden ("अथ राहुल स्तुषितकायाच् च्यविरवा मातुः यशोधरायाः क्षत्रियकन्यायाः कुक्षिमवतीर्ण इति । एव अनुभूयते यते भो धुतधर्मधर" I. 153). Then the retirement from the world of the Buddhas was narrated and Mahā-Kātyāyana referred to Bodhisattva Gautama's resolve not to enter again the fair city of Kapilavastu before he has passed beyond the power of old age and death ("न तं पुनरहं प्रवेक्ष्यमग्राप्राप्य जरामरणपारमिति" I. 157). This is the brief description of the *ten bhūmis* in the *Mahāvastu*.

PLURALITY OF BUDDHAS

Now I shall give a brief note on the cult of plurality of Buddhas prevalent in society during the period of the *Mahāvastu*. The Buddhists, like the Brāhmaṇic Hindus, believed deeply in re-births (*janmāntaravāda*); so innumerable and countless Buddhas are conceived to have appeared in the previous *kalpas*, according to Buddhist scriptures, specially in the Mahāyāna literature. Gautama Buddha is himself mentioned as having adored, through immeasurable *kalpas* in his previous births, countless Tathāgatas, Arhans and even per-





fect Buddhas. The Mahāyāna admits a belief in the existence of many Buddhas. In some Pali books we get reference to only seven Buddhas including Gautama Buddha, and in other later Pali books we learn of twenty-four Buddhas. In this cult we feel that a conception of an eternal Buddha runs through such ideas. In the *Mahāvastu*, however, we have a discourse (III. 224 ff) called *Bahu-Buddha-sūtra* wherein we find these Buddhas described as gentle-hearted (*mṛidu-chitta*), loving-hearted (*maitra-chitta*), controlled-hearted (*dānta-chitta*), calm-hearted (*śānta-chitta*), free-hearted (*mukta-chitta*), pure-hearted (*śuddha-chitta*), firm-hearted (*sthita-chitta*), unattached-hearted (*asaṅga-chitta*) and so on; and they are also the best of Brāhmaṇas (*Brāhmaṇottama*), nobles or Kshatriyas, versed in the Vedas (*Vedapārāga*) and what is more important they are speakers in an unequivocal manner (*aviparītavādins*), speaking what is not false (*avitathavādins*) and ever speaking what is not untrue (*ananyathāvādins*). We know that Gautama Buddha called himself Tathāgata i.e., one who has attained the *tathā* or truth or reality. According to the *Mahāvastu* Buddha, while once staying at Śrāvastī, told Ānanda that he sat there for three months abiding in the states of former Tathāgatas (*purima-Tathāgatas*), Arhans (Arhats) and perfect Buddhas (*samyak-sambuddhas*). There are several traditional lists of a legion of former Buddhas—each of whom proclaimed the next one. Gautama Buddha himself was proclaimed by the previous Buddha, Kāśyapa. Of course, the names of the famous ones viz., Vipasyin, Śikhi, Viśvabhū, Krakuchchanda, Konākamuṇi, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuṇi all occur therein. You are all aware that in the succession of these Buddhas, the last Buddha, as proclaimed by Lord Śākyamuṇi, will be Maitreya. This future (*anāgata*) Buddha will also be mighty in power, and the leader of a host of seers and a teacher of seventy hundred *koṭis* of men (“एतेषां बुद्धानां परंपरायां, मंत्रेभ्यो परिचमको भविष्यति । महानुभावो ऋक्संघनायको, विनेष्यति कोटिशतानि सप्तति” ॥ III. 240). Being asked by Ānanda regarding the root of Buddha's shining performances in the world of gods and men, the Lord replied by saying that it is he who planted in all great former Buddhas the root of virtue (*kuśalamūla*) and rendered them service, and so they became mighty in



power, infinite in wisdom and famous in the world. He also said that his power also prevailed because he honoured these previous sublime Buddhas and he on that account attained glory and fame shining in the worlds of men, *devas* and *Brahmā*. In rapture Ānanda declared that he had now come to comprehend the sphere of these many Buddhas which the Lord said as being beyond thought, beyond compare and beyond measure. Buddha himself further said in this connection that as a *paramārthadarśin* (knowing the highest truth or good) he was equal and peer of the previous Buddhas.

In this context we may note a strange fact learnt from the *Mahāvastu* also, that regarding the birth (*jāti*) of the Buddhas, they are mentioned as all being born either in the *Brāhmaṇa* or the *Kshatriya* family. Buddha himself said that he was born in the *Kshatriya* family of *Ikshvāku* (a kinsman of the *āditya*, the sun); and the future Buddha, he declared, would be born in a very rich and prosperous *Brāhmaṇa* family, but he would renounce his plentiful pleasures of the world and accept religious life. He referred in passing that *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha, *Vipaśyin*, *Śikhi* and *Viśvabhū* were born in *Kshatriya* families and *Krakuchchhanda*, *Konākamuṇi* and *Kāśyapa* in *Brāhmaṇa* families. The *Mahāvastu* recounts declaring thus:—"These supreme persons arise in one of two kinds of families—either in a family of the *Kshatriya* or in one of *Brāhmaṇa*. When the *Kshatriyas* are reputed as foremost in the world, the Buddhas, the supreme men, appear in the family of the *Kshatriyas*, and when the *Brāhmaṇas* are reputed for their worth in the world they, the great seers, are born in the *Brāhmaṇa* families" ("द्विहिमेव ते कुलेहि उत्पद्यन्ति नरोत्तमाः । क्षत्रियकुले च प्रथमं अथवापि ब्राम्हणकुले ॥ यदाहि अग्रा आख्याता लोकस्मिं भोन्ति क्षत्रिया । तदा क्षत्रियकुले बुद्धा उत्पद्यन्ति नरोत्तमाः ॥ यदा तु गुणसंख्याता लोकस्मिं भोन्ति ब्राह्मणाः ॥ तदा ब्राह्मणकुले बुद्धा उत्पद्यन्ति महर्षिणः ॥" III. 247-248).

As to the excellent traits in the character of all Buddhas, the Lord said that energy (*vīrya*) is the instrument of enlightenment and that they progressed because of their virtues of renunciation (*prahāṇa*), charity (*dāna*), self-control (*dama*) and restraint (*saṁyama*). He himself attained enlightenment in the ninety-first *kalpa* since his efforts. All Buddhas belauded the virtues of liberality (*dāna*), morality (*śīla*) and wisdom



(*prajñā*). The past Buddhas were caravan-leaders of *dharma* and they stifled their passions, were revered and honoured and were self-dependent.

PRATĪTYASAMUTPĀDA, THE CHATURĀRYASATYA AND THE
MADHYAMĀ PRAṬIPADĀ

I refrain from discussing fully the famous and well-known Buddhist formula of *pratītyasamutpāda* (प्रतीत्यसमुत्पाद) as treated in the *Mahāvastu*, specially in the *Māra-vijaya* episode as described in the second *Avalokita-sūtra* (II. 293 ff). You all know that in the allegorical story of Gautama's victory over Evil—the *Māra*—the Bodhisattva, struck the earth with his right hand and the whole earth resounded and a panic was produced and *Māra*'s ill-starred army fled away. The Bodhisattva without any tremor shone like the Sun. He then declared (according to the *Mahāvastu*) the famous doctrine of the *Pratītyasamutpāda* i.e. the chain of causes and effects, or in the words, the law of happening by way of a cause, or the law of origination of a thing or phenomenon depending on another as its cause. He expressed the formula thus:—

"This is ill or misery; this is the arising of ill; this is the cessation of ill; and there is the Way (meaning the *Majjhima-paṭipadā*, the Middle Path, the *Aṣṭāṅgika-mārga*). When *this* exists, *that* appears, when *this* is destroyed, *that* disappears or ceases to be". ("इदं च दुःखं अयं च समुदयः तथा निरोधो अथ मार्गश्चेष्टो। इमस्मिं सन्ते इमो प्रादूर्भोति इमस्मिं नष्टे इदमस्तमेति" ॥ II. 345).

Then the Bodhisattva further developed the idea of the chain of cause and effect in these words:—"From ignorance (*अविद्या*) arises the make-up (*संस्कार*) of coming-to-be, which again causes consciousness (*विज्ञान*) and from this is born individuality (*नामरूप*). This individuality gives rise to the six-fold faculties of the senses (*षडायतन*) which again results in contact (*स्पर्श*). This contact causes the rise of feelings (*वेदना*) which, in its turn, produces craving (*तृष्णा*), which itself causes grasping (*उपादान*). This grasping becomes the cause of one's passing from life to life (*भव*) and thence comes birth (*जाति*), old age, death and disease and from these arise all kinds of sorrow, lamentations, troubles, ills and despair (*दुःख*). (II. 346).



After His investigation into the *dharma* (nature) of causation, the cessation (निरोध) of those things became clear to His omniscience. Understanding their nature to be such, the Bodhisattva attained the peerless, noble and supreme enlightenment'.

In this treatise (the *Mahāvastu*) which is so full of Buddhist ethical principles, we get reference to, in addition to the four Aryan truths (चतुरार्यसत्य), the *Ārya-aṣṭāṅgika mārga* or the *madhymā praṭipadā*, the Middle Path (III. 331) in the discourse on the rolling of the wheel. It is the Aryan eight-fold Way (आर्याष्टांगिका), that is to say, right belief (सम्यग्दृष्टिः), right purpose or resolve (सम्यक्प्रकल्पः), right endeavour (सम्यग्व्यायामः), right action (सम्यक्कर्मः), right living or occupation (सम्यगाजोवः), right speech (सम्यग्वा), right mindfulness (सम्यक्स्मृतिः), and right concentration (सम्यक्समाधिः). The reform the middle course awakened to by the Tathāgata in his Aryan *dharma* and discipline (विनय) and this course when adopted confers insight (चक्षुकरणेया), conduces to calm (उपसमसंबर्तनिका), to disgust with the world (निर्विंशये), to passionlessness (विरागाये), to cessation (निरोधाय), to the state of a recluse (आमण्याये), to enlightenment (संबोधाये), and to *nirvāṇa* (निर्वाणाय). Detailing out these topics here is out of the question.

BUDDHA-PŪJĀ (WORSHIP OF THE BUDDHA) PREVALENT IN THE TIME OF THE MAHĀVASTU

The *Mahāvastu* puts the following verses (II. 362) in the mouth of Lord Buddha about the efficacy of the worship of the Buddha:—

“अविद्या हेतु भवसंस्कृतस्य, तं प्रत्ययं भवति जाननाय ।
 विज्ञानहेतु भवे नामरूपं, प्रत्ययं च तं भवति षडिन्द्रियस्य ॥
 षडिन्द्रियं भवति तस्य स्पर्शजातं, स्पर्शं च हेतु भवे वेदनानां ।
 संवेदयन्तो जायति तूष्णालु, तूष्णाप्रत्ययं भवति उपादानं ॥
 उपादानहेतुं भवं संस्मरन्ति, जातोजरामरणं तथैव व्याधिः ।
 शोका च भोन्ति परिदेवितानि, आयासा (?) भोन्ति दुःखदीर्घमनस्यं ॥
 प्रतोत्यधर्मं प्रविचितो बोधिसत्त्वोः, निरोधस्तेषामविकलि सर्वज्ञाने ।
 तेषां च एवं प्रकृति पश्यमानो, अतुल्यं प्राप्तो वरमप्रबोधि ॥

II. 345-346



“बोधाय चित्तं नमेत्वा हिताय सर्वप्राणिना ।
 यस् स्तूपं लोकनाथस्य करोति अभिप्रवक्षिणं ॥
 स्मृतोऽमृतो मृतोऽमृतो पुण्यवन्तो विशारदो ।
 भोति सर्वत्र जातिषु चरन्तो बोधिचारिकाः” ॥

'The person (called a son of the Buddha) who, having turned his thoughts for attainment of enlightenment (only) for the sake of welfare of all living beings, goes round (saluting reverentially) a tope of the Saviour of the world, becomes, in all places in all his lives, mindful, thoughtful, virtuous and assured as he fares on the way to enlightenment'. It is also said that such beings shall themselves become saviours of the world, all-seeing with passions stifled and lusts destroyed (“सर्वे च सदा सियु लोकनाथा, समन्तचक्षु हतरजनिक्किलेशा” II. 373), and they are destined to become peerless Buddhas in the world after having for a long time pursued the good in their various lives (“वरिद्वार्य सुचिरं चारिकासु, सो बुद्धो लंके भवति अतुल्यो” II. 373). Then we find in this book (in the *Avalokita-sūtra*) an enumeration of the simple methods of *Buddha-pūjā*, which, if resorted to with devotion, will lead to accumulation of incalculable merits as a result of which they will never become confounded by appearances and will be able to perceive the unsubstantiality or soullessness and emptiness or non-existence of all *dharma*s (the things or appearances in the objective world).

Briefly speaking, the methods are the following:—

- (1) salutation of a tope and monuments erected in the Buddha's honour;
- (2) placing of a garland or a festoon of fine silk on a tope or a monument containing the relics of the Buddha;
- (3) offering of flowers, burning a pinch of incense in Buddhist shrines;
- (4) putting a flag on the Lord's shrines;
- (5) holding a single light over the tope;
- (6) placing thereon a sun-shade;
- (7) honouring the Buddha by playing on instruments of music in shrines;
- (8) putting adornments on the shrines;
- (9) cleansing the topes and washing away dust therein;
- (10) offering of dried cow-dung cakes in shrines for preparing fire therein;



- (11) offering even a drop of oil at a tope;
- (12) taking bricks and carrying them to shrines;
- (13) anointing shrines with perfumes;
- (14) placing a necklace of gems on them;
- (15) giving one trustful thought to the Buddha;
- (16) bringing net-work coverings to shrines;
- (17) taking and throwing away faded flowers from shrines;
- (18) sprinkling of sandal-wood powder thereon;
- (19) making a reverential bow before a tope;
- (20) offering of a bowl in Buddha's name for his acceptance;
and,
- (21) forming a resolution in mind that they (these worshippers) may set free the un-free and in their own emancipated state may become an eye to the blind and dispel their gloom and darkness, and may lead across the beings who have not crossed, may fare without a tremor through the whole world, and release those in misery.

We are told that such benefactors and worshippers of the *Buddha*, the *Dharma* and the *Saṅgha* never feel troubled by any ills of the world and they may become distinguished wealthy merchants, householders possessing wonderful treasures, king's sons, ministers and even powerful universal rulers.

THE PRATYEKA-BUDDHAS

The concept of the Pratyeka-Buddhas is found to have developed to good extent during the period represented by the *Mahāvastu*. These are self-controlled and self-possessed ascetics who attain enlightenment without proclaiming it to the world. In Buddhist dogmatics the Pratyeka-Buddhas attain enlightenment for themselves by themselves without the aid of any teachers and they do not even propose to act as teachers to others. They arise whenever Buddhas do not appear in the world (III. 27). These individually enlightened saintly persons may be countless. They are splendid in their silence, possessing great power, remaining almost in loneliness, like the rhinoceros, taming and calming only their own selves and passing away almost finally after winning enlightenment. They, however, do not possess the



five eyes, viz. the eye of the flesh (मांसचक्षुः), the deva eye (दिव्यचक्षुः), the eye of wisdom (प्रज्ञाचक्षुः), the eye of dharma (धर्मचक्षुः), and the eye of a Buddha (बुद्धचक्षुः), which all can only be possessed by the Buddhas (I. 158). They function to constitute a field for winning merit. They are objects of receiving offerings from other people. Their deportment and demeanour are described in the *Mahāvastu* in many a context. They have courteous manner with regard to their approach and leave, they look forward and around, they extend and withdraw their hands and they carry with them their cloak, bowl and robes. They look like *nāgas* (elephants). They appear to have accomplished their task. Their organs of sense are turned inwards and their mind is not turned outwards. They do not look in any way disturbed, because of their achievement of harmony with the *dharma*. They never look forward beyond a plough's length. Such was their auspicious deportment.

In this connection we may compare the deportment and demeanour of the Buddha which appeared first to Śāriputra, when he saw the Lord from a distance as described in the *Mahāvastu* (III. 63-64).

A NEW JĀTAKA (THE ANAṄGAṆA JĀTAKA)

In my first lecture it was said that the *Mahāvastu* also contains some new Jātaka stories, which are not found included in the Pali Jātaka stories. Here I shall briefly place before you a sample of such a new Jātaka (II. 271-276), called *Anaṅgaṇa-Jātaka*. The monks asked Lord Buddha of the great prosperity and uncommon wealth possessed by the householder, Jyotishka, who was admitted into the Order and ordained, and then became fully free from all lusts. The Buddha replied saying that there was, many *kalpas* ago, a king named Bandhuma ruling from his capital Bandhumatī. He was the father of the great previous Buddha Vipasyin. It may be told in passing that the *Divyāvadāna* also has described the wealth, prosperity and piety of Jyotishka, the householder, and as in the *Mahāvastu* so in that book, the monks enquired from the Buddha about what good deed was performed by Jyotishka in a former life to win such good fortune in this life. In this Jātaka we are told that King



Bandhuma invited Lord Vipasyin to his capital which was the native place of the Lord. At that time there was a householder, a very rich merchant named Anaṅgaṇa living in that city. First of all, it was he who approached Lord Vipasyin, and invited the Lord to be entertained by him for three months and the Lord accepted this invitation proffered to him first by the householder, and so He (the Lord) could not accept the king's invitation to be similarly entertained. The king got fretted by the action of Anaṅgaṇa, the householder. The king (Bandhuma) requested the Lord to eat with himself one day, and with Anaṅgaṇa the next day. The Lord replied—"That may be possible, if however Anaṅgaṇa (the accepted host) gives his consent to such an arrangement." The king sent for Anaṅgaṇa and threatened him saying that his term of life would come to its end, if he went against his king's pleasure. A compromise between the king and Anaṅgaṇa was reached and it was so arranged that Lord Vipasyin would be the king's guest on one day and Anaṅgaṇa's the next. Anaṅgaṇa always improved upon the hospitality to the Lord shown by the king at his turn. The prime minister was asked by the king to hinder the better success of Anaṅgaṇa in the matter of entertaining the Lord, his Son. On the king's last entertaining day he arranged for a royal reception to the Lord in his large and beautiful park which was decorated gaily with all sorts of luxuries such as sandal-seats for the Lord's monks, young attendants decked in finery, and well-caparisoned lordly elephants holding umbrellas over the guests. The king issued an order prohibiting sellers of wood and stick to sell them to any body under threat of penalty. When Anaṅgaṇa heard of this prohibition he became sad and reflective because of the difficulty he would fall into for cooking food for the Lord and his monks for the last day. In this predicament Śakra, the Lord of devas, appeared in person before Anaṅgaṇa and by his own power provided the householder with all sorts of excellent food, seats, pavilion (constructed immediately at Śakra's order by Viśvakarman, as if by magic), elephants including his own Eravaṇa elephant, sun-shades and attendants. Anaṅgaṇa requested king Bandhuma to come and wait upon the *saṅgha*, along with



himself. On entering the pavilion the king wondered at seeing the varied display, and thought that this marvel must have been produced by the power of merit of the householder, Anāṅga. When the meals were finished, Anāṅga expressed his vow in this way—"On account of my meritorious gifts and my good actions may I partake of a unique celestial happiness and win the favour of such a unique Master who would teach me the *dharma*! And may I understand the *dharma*, and renouncing the world may I become free from all lusts!"

Gautama Buddha now told the monks that the present householder Jyotishka was in that life the householder, Anāṅga, during the former Buddha Vipasyin's time.

Very often even in old Indian Society a sort of competition between a king and rich householders could be observed in showing their splendour of wealth in giving reception to high personages—even to a Buddha. In the above Jātaka story we also observe people's deep belief in meritorious deeds leading to high position in life. Belief in *karma* and *janmāntara-vāda* are in the core of Indian philosophical thoughts. A belief also in the personal appearance of gods before virtuous people was also prominent in religious thoughts of old.



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